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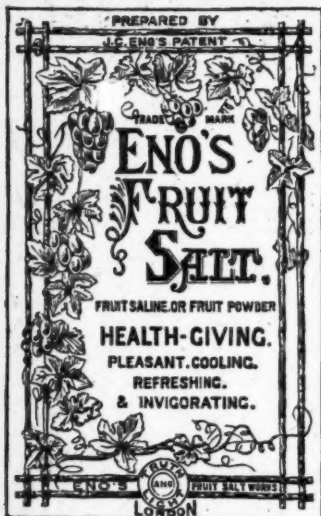
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By ANDREW LANG

London: LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row  
and New York: 15 East 16<sup>th</sup> Street



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*Young Ladies' Journal.*

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## FROM ENGLAND TO SYDNEY ON BOARD THE 'SAMUEL

PLIMSOLL.'—'Dear Sir.—I have just received a letter from my daughter, who sailed for Sydney last April as assistant-matron of the "Samuel Plimsoll," in which she says: "I am sorry, indeed, dad, to hear how the winter has tried you. Make up your mind to come out here. You will never regret it; and don't forget to bring some ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." It was the only cure on board for sea-sickness. I gave it nearly all away to those who were ill, which seemed to revive them, and they soon began to rally under its soothing influence.

'I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully, TRUTH,

'Mr. J. C. ENO.'

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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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JULY 1890.

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## *Virginie.*

A TALE OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

BY VAL PRINSEP, ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

### CHAPTER XXXVII.

ROUSSELET.

WHEN the La Beauce family took up their quarters with Jacques le Blanc, Rousselet, who had lived in the house ever since the opening of the café, gave up his room without a murmur and sought a modest lodging close by. He maintained his connection with the Sèvres porcelain works. But, though the manufactory was still kept at work, the demand for porcelain had much fallen off, so the artist had considerable leisure, and was enabled to devote the principal part of his time to politics. Rousselet was not a great orator, yet there was a good honest shrewdness about the man which, coupled with his intense earnestness, went far towards gaining him influence with his fellows. Moreover, he was of the people and knew their feelings and wants. So it happened that though he was not a member of the Convention, and seldom was heard at the Jacobin Club, where all the greater lights of the Revolution aired their eloquence, in the committee-room of his section he was much listened to. And the Citoyen Rousselet, being found a dependable man, with a good head for business, acquired considerable importance.

Notwithstanding his apparently stern nature, he was a man of singular gentleness. He would not willingly have crushed a fly, and certainly to injure a human being was revolting to his disposition. He was fully aware that a great revolution was not to be effected without bloodshed, that opposition must sometimes be put down by force, and that a power like that of the old *régime* in France, in which the few held sway over the many, must be convinced by drastic measures that a change was necessary. Rousselet believed in the sovereignty of the people. The voice of the people ought to be powerful, the instincts of the people were always just, the orders of the people must be obeyed. But having had a close experience of the September massacres he indignantly repudiated the assertion of Robespierre that only one innocent man had been sacrificed. The injustice done on that occasion was too palpable. He was sickened by what he had seen. Surely this was not a thing to be proud of. Surely the voice of the sovereign people would be raised against these atrocities. When he found that the leaders of the Republic did not repudiate the 'Septembriseurs,' and even gloried in the blood that had been shed, he was shaken in his faith. The young Republic of which he dreamed could surely be formed without this cementing of blood.

When the cause needed it he was willing enough to expose his life. At the assault of the Tuileries he had been a leader in the attack. When the Suisses yielded and were shot down in the streets, he had been a calm spectator, though not a participator in the massacre. These were foreigners, and wore the hated badge of the tyrants of France, and the people's blood was up. The victims of September were Frenchmen, and many of them innocent. Therefore, though he would defend the excesses of that occasion, as he had done to La Beauce, his conscience, which it is feared is an unpleasant commodity to a patriot, was shocked, and for the first time doubts arose in his mind that all was not going well.

The sight of the happiness of the La Beauce family insensibly exercised a calming effect on him. He was new to the thing, having never had any family ties of his own. As he saw the devotion of the family centred on the Count, who had so nearly been taken from them, he could not but remember the many families thrown into mourning by the wretched work of the 'Septembriseurs.'

A simple, unostentatious man, Rousselet had no personal am-

bition, and, doing all he could for what he thought was a great cause, was content to efface himself. He contrived, notwithstanding the dearth of provisions, to live on his small earnings, which were, however, increased shortly after by the allowance of forty sous a day decreed to members of the sectional committees. Always neat and dapper in appearance, the little man formed a contrast to most of the popular leaders, with whom slovenliness was a mark of Republicanism. What little leisure he had, he spent in painting, sometimes for the porcelain manufactory of Sèvres, but more often ideal compositions which it must be owned had no great merit. For Rousselet, though a good workman, and with all the temperament of a fine artist, was deficient in real art training.

The duties of a sectional committee-man were very varied and important. They involved the organisation and enrolling of the National Guard, the safety of the sectional district, and above all the distribution of the allowance of bread. This last duty was a very irksome and troublesome affair during these days of scarcity. Each citizen was entitled to a certain weight of bread, and, as all had to be supplied in turn, outside each baker's shop there was a rope to which it was necessary to hold fast, so as to enable the recipients to approach the *grille* at which the bread was doled out in single file. Many were the riots that arose—sometimes it was from complaints as to the quality of the bread, sometimes from deficiency of weight. Accusations were made of embezzlement and swindling against the bakers, or even the authorities. The bread was bad enough, being full of husks and straw; the people impatient and starving. It required then great firmness and discretion in those in command to prevent bloodshed and confusion. It was here that Rousselet's talents shone. No one could be more just, no one knew better how to appease or command.

Besides the regulation of the affairs of their section, the sectional committee took upon itself to discuss the affairs of the nation, and, on occasions, to send deputations to the Assembly itself, to strengthen and advise that body in matters where the sovereign people were interested.

In his little senate, where once Rousselet had ruled supreme, he found when he advocated more peaceful measures he met with much opposition. Everything he proposed tending to calm the people was denounced as counter-revolutionary, and he himself accused of lukewarm patriotism. It was on this account he abstained from visiting his friend Le Blanc.

When the King was put on his trial, Rousselet was on the side of the people and approved of his sentence. To him the death of this man was the only means of bringing together the different parties in France. Destroy the fountain head of opposition, and the aristocratic party would cease to exist, the fear of treason no longer haunt the minds of men, and the Convention be enabled to devote themselves to the consolidation of the Republic. He was bitterly disappointed then at finding that, instead of calming, it seemed to exasperate the opposition of the different parties. The Girondins and the Mountain were at once at strife. Rousselet was not a Girondin. He disliked the idea of their rather fanciful Republic, about the details of which even they did not agree. This Republic, a mixture of Rome and America, did not appeal to the people of France, and Rousselet, an ardent disciple of J. J. Rousseau, believed in the people. When therefore they were arrested Rousselet still approved of the measure passed by the Convention. He thought the Girondins dangerous from their talent, and he was also convinced, as were many others, that they wished to divide France into a federation of Republics, whereas the Republic was according to all good patriots to be 'One and Indivisible.'

Yet another event strengthened the prejudice of Parisians against the Gironde. On July 13, Marat, the friend of the people, was stabbed in his bath by Charlotte Corday. In after years this beautiful girl has grown into a kind of Martyr of Liberty. Marie Antoinette and Madame Roland, both worthy of admiration, and the latter fired by true genius, yield in interest to this young woman, who could do as well as die. In truth she was the incarnation of one form of revolutionary ideal, that grafted on Roman tradition. If Brutus deserved well of his country, how much more this Charlotte Corday? But to those in power in Paris she appeared as a murderess. All these trembled at the thoughts of such a death at the hands of a woman. Who could tell from whom the unerring blow would come? Clearly she was the agent of these Girondins who shrunk from no means of destroying the Republic. Had not she come to Paris with a letter from Barbaroux? Was she not his mistress? What use was it for her to protest? Everyone knew the character of M. Barbaroux. And then Marat, the champion of the oppressed! Glorious be his memory! Let him be deified—this misshapen, terrible little man! He understood what was wanted! He could speak to the world in a way they comprehended.

Rousselet had been an admirer of Marat, though somewhat disillusioned since September. Still it was not to be denied that this man had done good work in furthering the Revolution. When therefore he saw Charlotte Corday drawn to her execution he was unmoved by compassion. He marvelled at her beauty as she sat clothed in the scarlet cloak worn by murderesses, smiling sweetly at the hooting of the crowd. She seemed to him the type of a beautiful sin, lovely in spite of her murderous resolves, one whose charms caused him to shudder.

Rousselet's hatred of all things royal made him acquiesce in the condemnation and death of Marie Antoinette. Yet the sympathy shown towards her and her family by Virginie had more than once softened his heart. But he put away pity from him. To the Republic first his love was given. 'Tears,' he said to himself, 'who would not shed tears if a loved one was ordered to lose an arm, yet who would hesitate to authorise the operation knowing it for the patient's good? Let us shed tears over her in private as a woman, but as a queen she is a constant threat against our Republic, and die she must for the good of the State. Who would not so die?' he thought, and, to do him justice, he would have readily laid down his life for the Republic he adored. It must be owned he did not dare say this to Virginie. He feared to lower himself in her estimation. So, like a man serving two mistresses, he found that his duty to one was like to cause an offence to the other.

Once after the departure of La Beauce, but during the trial of the Queen, he went to dine with Virginie and her father, going there by stealth, lest his presence should injure them in the eyes of the terrible men who ruled the nation. Be sure he was welcome to the little circle. The honesty and single-heartedness of the man had won a place in the affections of all. Even Célimène, who at first was rather frightened of him, had grown to respect him. 'He looks so sad and lonely,' she said to Virginie, 'and when he speaks of the Republic his eyes light up with such animation! How that man would love!' and then she added, 'Do you know he has really beautiful eyes!' Virginie smiled sadly. Loved? did she not know how he loved?

That evening she asked Rousselet to come to see her little son prepared for his bed. It was probably a scheme of this good woman's to try and bring him to a right sense of pity for the Queen, for whom she dared not openly plead for fear of being denounced. Not that she feared Rousselet, but walls have ears,

and in those days and for some months to come it behoved every-one who wished to preserve his freedom to be very circumspect. So Rousselet heard the little Jacques lisp his little prayer taught him by his mother, which she had not cared to alter after the death of the King, though she had now added 'and watch over dear father.' Virginie fixed her large eyes on the Republican while this prayer was offered. He knew it, though he never looked in her direction. To him, and such as him, all this praying was a hollow mockery, a remnant of the old fetish worship which had so long enslaved the minds of men. How was it then he was so moved by the sight of this mother and child? Perchance it was Nature, the great Factor of the world; Nature, the God of Jean Jacques; Nature, roused by the purest ideal of nature itself—a mother with her child! It could not be a reminiscence of his former self, the bitter dregs of the pottage of superstition on which he and all others of that time had been nourished in early youth! He said no word during or after the little scene. He hastily bid Virginie adieu, and as he kissed her hand at parting she felt a hot tear drop from his eager eyes. She looked at it there when he had gone and smiled, yet as she smiled she sighed. Did she recall the words of Célimène? Alas, poor mortal! made to love, yet denied a return! In thy stern heart thy mistress the Republic thou flatterest thyself suffices thee! Wert thou called on to sacrifice one, which would it be, thinkest thou?

Rousselet sped forth to his section, where that night there was to be a debate on the petitioning of the Convention to hurry the execution of the Austrian. During the storm of the denunciation Rousselet sat silent. In his ears yet lingered the lisping voice of little Jacques. 'God keep Louis and pity his poor wife and children.' Would anyone so pray for him in his trouble? He looked around on his colleagues among whom his life was passed. Not one of them would miss or regret him! He sat there silent while they passed with acclamation, 'That the officers of the section present a petition to the Convention, stating that Parisians would never be content while the hated Austrian lived.' He heard his name read among those who were to convey this petition. 'Pity his poor wife and child!' he seemed to hear a voice within him cry. He rose and said with calmness:—

'*Citoyens*, you are aware that I yield to none in my love for this our Republic. But I persecute not women and children. Let the wife of Louis Capet be. She cannot affect our Republic one way or the other. Let us as Frenchmen remember she is a woman and widow.'

Consternation fell on the meeting. Many, no doubt, thought with Rousselet. They had not the courage to avow their thoughts and even trembled to hear them put into words by another. A bitter Maratist, one Nortier, leaped to his feet. 'I ask to speak,' he shouted; 'let the words of this *ci-devant* patriot be taken down and remembered.'

'They are the words of counter-revolution,' cried another.

'A lover of the vile Austrian,' cried a third, who had been an official about the Court in the old days, cringing and fawning on those whom he now condemned without pity.

But Rousselet was firm. 'I do not say,' he said, when order was restored, 'I do not affirm that you ought not to offer this petition, I only state that I, personally, will not be of those to present it.'

He was as good as his word. Others carried the petition to the Convention. But from that moment his colleagues of the section looked askance on the counter-revolutionary.

When the Queen was taken to her execution in a common cart, Rousselet saw her pass. 'Perhaps,' he thought to himself, 'this is well for her. Perhaps,' whispered the old fetish of his youth, 'she will meet her loved ones in a few minutes; anyhow she will find peace!' Alas! this man had no peace. He loved two objects in life with all the strength of his stern nature. Virginie he knew could never be his. Was the Republic to prove a snare and delusion? Was this work of which he was so proud and in the excellence of which he would wish to believe, even as he believed in Virginie, to turn to a mere chaos, a devourer of men and women, a Mumbo Jumbo who required to be constantly fed with human sacrifice? His heart failed him when he thought how much had yet to be done before the Republic could arrive at perfection. Perhaps it could never be perfected.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A WANT OF 'CIVISM.'

So passed the months of winter with ever increase of victims led to execution. Gradually Rousselet became conscious of the fact that, when the barriers of Justice and Society are broken down, the torrent of lawless violence is irresistible. He was heart-broken. It was a Revolution, not a Republic, he had helped to

raise—a hideous, chaotic monster, whose goddess, instead of being a peaceful and beneficent figure of liberty, was a guillotine reeking with blood; a revolution whose ministers and leaders were without pity or remorse, whose terrors were not the work of passion as were the September massacres, but carried out with all the formalities of the law and supported by all the powers of the State. The fair realm of France, where tyranny was never more to exist, lay prostrate and helpless, nay, even speechless, before the uncrowned tyrants at the head of affairs.

Towards the end of March, when spring was filling the rest of the world with hope, Rousselet sat in his little room working out all this in his mind. Alone, in the midst of a silence which seemed to typify the chilled consternation of Paris, he pondered on the perversion of grand ideas, the overthrow of liberty. As he thought of all that might have been, and contrasted it with what was, he was maddened at the futility of all his efforts. His stern concentrated nature was capable of conceiving and carrying out any desperate plan. Should he arm himself and slay the tyrants? Alas! what use? Was not Marat slain? Did not history show that the steel of the assassin only tightened the chains of slavery? What did the dagger of Brutus and his friends but lead to the proscriptions of the triumvirs? Yet in the state of feverish irritation in which he had worked himself he could not bear to sit there inactive. Something he must do. What?

Rousselet, as we have said, was not alone in his ideas. Many men had the same fears for the Republic. Republic? Were not the armies Revolutionary? the committee who ruled everything Revolutionary? the officials, highest and lowest, Revolutionary? Where then was the Republic? Was there no hope?

Alas! hope entered not there. To the terrorists hope was treason.

Rousselet could bear to be alone no longer. He seized his hat and went forth. The streets were as silent as the room he had left. Men avoided each other, afraid lest, by addressing a 'suspect,' they might themselves be brought to be 'suspect.' The mansions, where dwelt the rich and great, were all shut. Over the doors of each house was written in large letters 'The property of the Nation.' Onward he walked, his features set with grave purpose, till he found himself before the portals of the Church of the Jacobins with its flamboyant architecture. Around that there was a crowd seeking admittance. Robespierre was speaking it was said, and the people crowded to hear his words,

Rousselet, being a member, had no difficulty in gaining admission. Robespierre was in the pulpit or rostrum. What new thing had this man to say? Denunciation—always denunciation. This day he was denouncing Hébert and his associates. In measured periods, with well-chosen, even pedantic words, for the good of the people he preached the destruction of these men as counter-revolutionists; the receivers of bribes from Pitt; the secret intriguers in the pay of the kings of the earth. Robespierre had gained in power of speaking these last months. His voice was still unmelodious, his manner bad, his accent provincial, but his words were well chosen, and his ideas sometimes not wanting in grandeur. As Rousselet listened his heart seemed to fill. Was this man a tyrant or a patriot? Neat, well-dressed, painstaking, Robespierre denounced with a calm, self-satisfied manner, and seemed quite pleased with himself as he finished his ornate peroration. It was the Jacobins' Club denouncing its rival the Cordeliers, and the Jacobins applauded vigorously their leader as he descended from his rostrum. Then Rousselet started up. 'I demand to be heard,' he cried.

He was known to many there as a staunch patriot, so his proposal was received with applause. He mounted the rostrum. His hard features were lighted with a strange fire as he gazed around.

'Citizens,' he said, 'I appear before you not for the first time. It has been my delight to listen to the splendid utterances of those great men who can give tangible form to what we all have on our minds but cannot formulate. I have learnt from them to love my country, to revere the Revolution, and, above all, adore the Republic. Citizens, the Republic is in all our hearts! Who would not die for her? who would live save for her honour alone? If I have, from time to time, asked you to listen to my feeble words, it has been only to emphasise the thoughts of others, more eloquent than myself. But to-day I speak for myself, yet shall I hope to enlist your sympathy for my cause. And to thee, oh Robespierre! I turn to thee, whom we all respect and love, whose example we strive to follow both in public and in private, and whose words are filled with love of the people. With outstretched hand, oh Robespierre, I invoke thee, sole representative of the people, now the voice of Marat is heard no longer among us.'

Loud cheers echoed through the old church at Rousselet's words. How long would applause follow on what he said?

For one instant he paused and then, gathering himself up, he cried: 'And this Republic that we love and this man whom we reverence, must they always be steeped in blood? Capet has

gone, the Austrian has gone—it is well. The Gironde has disappeared—we do not say but well again. But, oh Robespierre! is it not enough? Pause then. The Republic needs no more Republican blood, lest Liberty herself should find the current in her veins dried up, and her heart beat with feebler pulse from the loss. Can that heart's blood be supplied from outside? Where shall we find the generous fluid if not in the hearts of Frenchmen? Pause then! Let it be not in vain, oh Robespierre, that I appeal to thee! *Assez! Assez!*'

A dead silence fell on all gathered in the building. Men looked at Robespierre; his face was livid, ashy, his lips were tightly compressed. When Rousselet descended the rostrum Robespierre mounted again.

'My friends,' he said, 'the wretched man who has just addressed you is evidently distraught. Republican blood? Who asks for one drop of the precious liquor? It is the blood of traitors that is poison to our Republic. Men who intrigue and plot with the enemies of France and receive bribes from Pitt and Cobourg; men whose fury would lead to anarchy, or men whose clemency tends to weakness. The one would change Liberty into a bacchanal, the other to a prostitute, and both would bring you under the rule of the despised Capets. These are the men I would denounce, who find their way even into this club, that their violent tirades may lead you to folly, or their soft platitudes lull you to security. From both these we must purge ourselves. I propose that all such be expelled from the Jacobins and all its sister societies.'

Vociferous applause followed this speech. Already Robespierre had his list of those he wished expelled. They were all the most violent ultra-revolutionaries. He read the list, name by name; the expulsion was voted as he wished. Not a word was said about Rousselet; but he knew his turn was to come. As he left the club, men made way for him as if he were a leper; no voice of sympathy for him was heard, no hand was extended to bid him adieu. Alone he left the church and strode home. There he lighted his lamp and sat down. He had done the deed! His end was decreed; he knew it by the look of Robespierre. He had no time to lose. He opened his writing-book and set to work to write. To whom? He would have given the world to have sent his farewell words to Virginie, but he dared not; it might compromise her. So he wrote to Le Blanc. It was not a long letter; it was soon over, and when done he sat gazing at the fire that glimmered in his humble stove. Of what did he think?

Dim recollections of his old life, a life of toil and hard work, of his youth, of his mother, long since dead, of his struggles to acquire the requisite knowledge of his trade, the life at Sèvres and the coming of Virginie. Ah! then there was a time of hope. Alas! for how short a time. And now the idol of his manhood was also shattered, broken irretrievably, beyond all hope of repair, what was then left for him? To die? Yet—yet to be extinguished, to become a thing of naught, a *néant*? ‘God keep Louis, and pity his poor wife and children,’ whispered a child’s voice within him. Was it little Jacques’ voice? or his own small voice as he stood at his mother’s knee? His mother so long forgotten, who had been so proud of his talents, and had slaved for him and his education. The little shop she kept grew plainer before him. There she bustled, a notable woman, with her bright clean cap and her shrill voice. The people came and went, for the Mère Rousselet was known and esteemed in the *quartier*. ‘Seest thou my boy,’ she seemed to say (how often he had listened to her with pride!), ‘he will be heard of, if he grows to be a man.’ How long was it ago, years? Why it seemed but yesterday! Dear mother, did she see him now? Rousselet started from his chair and stamped his foot with impatience. ‘The old fetish,’ he cried; ‘folly! folly!’ Yet were his eyes wet with tears. He paced his room. Was it all folly? Was there no comfort from without? Did God bless and watch over anyone? He stopped and raised his pale face. ‘Nature or God,’ he cried, ‘what matter?’ Something he wished for greater than man, more lovable, more pitiful; where should he find it? Never had he felt so truly that there was such a Supreme Being. And yet so much was he out of love with everything human, that he was inclined to believe in the malignity rather than the compassion of the all-powerful Deity.

So fretting yet longing, half convinced yet not believing, the unhappy Rousselet passed that night till the early grey of the March morning appeared through his little window, and he heard the sound of stirring in the house. He steadied his mind, and walked to the shelf above his humble bed. There stood the ‘Sèvres jardinière’ he had painted with such pleasure as an offering to Virginie—sole ornament of his simple room, with the exception of one or two little canvases, on which he had spent his leisure moments. He raised it with careful hands, and dusted it as a priest would the object of his adoration. Then he wrapped it up in a parcel, tying it safely with a cord, to which he attached his

letter, placed his hat on his head and quickly descended the common staircase of his house.

Like all French houses, that in which Rousselet lived was inhabited by many families, each of whom had separate apartments. They were most of them people who worked for their livelihood. At that early hour some were already astir, and greeted their neighbour cordially as he descended the common stairs. The *concierge* was bustling about the little court-yard sweeping and tidying her domain, a keen, bright-eyed, small woman who knew well all her *locataires'* businesses, as was incumbent on a *concierge* in the year II of the Republic. She had a kindly feeling towards Citoyen Rousselet, first, because he gave her but little trouble, and secondly, because he was powerful in the section, and could help a poor body to get food when times were bad. She stayed her busy broom on seeing him.

'Good day, citizen,' she cried; 'thou art early astir to-day! Yet wert thou late abed.'

'Thanks,' answered Rousselet, 'I was at the Jacobins.'

The woman came close up to him and asked in a whisper, 'What news? Does the guillotine work well?'

'Excellently,' said Rousselet, with affected cheerfulness. 'We shall have great cheer soon.' Then he asked, 'Is thy boy yet up?'

'Up?' cried the *concierge*; 'ay, for such as we there is no bed after sunrise. He is in the street, where I heard him crying because he could not get his little guillotine to work. Like father, like son! He must amuse himself like his elders;' and she laughed again and renewed her sweeping.

Rousselet passed out into the street, and there found a little lad of twelve, clad in full *carmagnole* costume, with woollen red night-cap and knitted vest of the red, white, and blue common throughout France. The boy was a pet of Rousselet's; he had frequently out of his poor stock of money bought sweets and toys for him.

'*Tiens*, Victor!' he cried; 'wilt thou do me a service?'

The boy came to him at once. 'What is it the *citoyen* wishes?' he demanded, looking shrewdly at the questioner, for even children learnt caution in those days.

'Seest thou this packet?' said Rousselet; 'I would have thee take it to the Café de la Grande Nation. Thou knowest it; it is where I gave thee a cake two days ago. Do thou give it to my friend Citoyen le Blanc. Have a care thou dost not break it.'

'No fear, *citoyen*,' cried the lad; 'it is not fifty mètres from here. If thou thinkest I shall break it, why takest thou not the parcel thyself?' and the imp glanced at Rousselet with a supernaturally cunning look.

'Because,' said Rousselet, 'I have something else to do, and besides I wish thee to earn a cake, of which here is the price.'

'Give,' cried the boy, holding out his hand.

'In good time,' answered Rousselet; 'when thou bringest in answer some word of *Citoyen le Blanc* thou shalt have thy cake.'

'Thou wert ever a careful man,' laughed the boy, but he took the packet, and went whistling in the direction of *Le Blanc's* house.

Rousselet stood gazing after him. The last link that bound him to life seemed gone. When the boy returned he was still there at the door.

'Thou hast not gone then,' cried the boy.

'It is better to wait lest I missed thee. What said *Le Blanc*?'

'He said "*Virginie* will be pleased to see this again." Where's the cake?'

Rousselet gave a large portion of his scanty fund, and with a sigh re-entered the house, while the boy, forgetting his toy, rushed off to a neighbouring *pâtissier*.

Rousselet, on gaining his room, went up to a little canvas that stood on the easel. It was not a grand work of art—the head of a woman—but it was unmistakably like *Virginie*. The poor fellow had painted it from memory. He gazed at it fondly, then taking it in both his hands he kissed it. 'They must not find thee,' he said, 'and yet it goes to my heart to destroy thee. What does it matter?' he added, after a pause. 'Do I want this daub to remind me of thy sweet face?' With a strong wrench he broke the stretcher, and crumpling the canvas together placed it in his stove. He watched it burn with sad eyes. It had occupied much of his leisure to paint this little picture, but it must go with all that would or might compromise her. The flame burnt fiercely for a few minutes, then sunk lower and lower till nought remained but the red glow of the embers. Rousselet turned away saying 'Now I am ready.' Then he threw himself upon his bed and slept.

It was late when he woke. The March sun was shining through his window, gilding with its feeble rays the poor deal furniture. He started up and strove to recollect the events of

the past night. It was eleven o'clock and nothing had happened. He did not flatter himself with the idea he had been forgotten. He knew other and more noted men would have the first denunciation, but that he was doomed, and that the guillotine would be his lot, he felt assured. When he opened his mouth at the Jacobins, he was fully aware he was committing suicide as effectively as though he were placing a loaded pistol to his head. Yet the idea of suicide itself never occurred to him, nor did he ever form any remote plan of evasion. With his position in the section it would have been so easy to escape from Paris; and at the last, a touch of the trigger would baulk the revenge of Robespierre! Somehow he was determined to face the worst. Perhaps he had an idea that his death was necessary to the Republic; that he might aid to complete the hecatomb of victims daily being sacrificed to the goddess of Liberty. So as he made his toilette, and carefully arranged his ever neat and dapper costume, he determined to continue his daily vocation as though there were no furies pursuing him, no nemesis in store for him.

Having finished his toilette he made his simple morning meal, making himself a cup of coffee, and eating with it a piece of the miserable bread, half husks and straw, on which the people of Paris were fed by the authorities. Then he sallied forth to the committee-room of the section.

When he arrived the committee was already sitting. Nortier, the Maratist, was in the chair. As he approached he heard loud voices, as though an animated debate was in progress, but, when he appeared, a dead silence fell on the men assembled. Rousselet took his seat calmly at the table. He noticed that the man next to him shrank from him; that men looked at each other, some grew pale, some merely shrugged their shoulders. Nortier was pulling his long Jacobin moustache. The silence became oppressive. At length Rousselet himself rose. 'Citizens,' he said, 'my entrance seems to have disturbed you, and stopped your business. Why should it? Are you afraid of one who has incurred the reproach of Robespierre? who has dared to advocate peace and mercy? Is it so? Then I pity you, and still more the Republic, that has already fallen so low that it must cringe and fawn on one of its own citizens, setting up a tyrant in the place of the one we who made the Republic had such difficulty in pulling down. Thou, Nortier, wert at the Jacobins last night, and heard'st what I said. Thou and I were Maratists. The number of heads he demanded has nearly fallen. If they wish for one more mine

is here to complete the tale, but then let these be enough. Thou heard'st me last night; did I say aught against the Republic? aught that a citizen and a patriot need be ashamed of? Speak and tell our friends here!'

Rousselet's words were delivered with fire and effect, and there were several cries of 'Well!' but as he sat down Nortier started up. He had always been jealous of Rousselet's influence, and hated him from the confidence he inspired, which he, Nortier, could not hope to equal. Here he felt was a chance of destroying his rival and possibly of stepping into his place.

'*Citoyen*,' he cried, 'thou appealest to me; I answer thee. I heard thee last night, I have heard thee before, in this room, advocating counter-revolution. Thou wert not listened to at the Jacobins, we will not hear thee here. I denounce thee as a traitor, a counter-revolutionary, a plotter for Capet, a defender of the Austrian, and I move that thy name be removed from the list of this committee and erased from the acts we have passed!'

Great applause followed these words. Rousselet, nothing daunted, rose and answered:—

'It is well, Nortier; thou hast answered as I expected thou wouldst. In place of argument thou usest denunciation. As for me, think not I dispute the decision of the people. They vote a tyranny, let it be so, but I shall not see it; Louis or Maximilien, what matter? Vote my exclusion, have everything done in order and let me go. I am weary of Charlatanism, weary of struggling for what appears to be unattainable. Vote, my friends,' and he stood with his arms folded and a smile on his thin lips.

Among those present were many who felt the truth of his words, and some few who had pity for him and did not fear to avow it. 'M. Rousselet,' whispered one, while the clamour raised by his last speech still lasted, 'you had better withdraw. There are some among us who are with you but who dare say nothing here, where it would be useless. You are a good citizen and we believe in you.'

But Rousselet still remained. Nortier, the president of the day, put the vote for expulsion, and, when it came to the point, not one voted against the motion!

When the voting was over Rousselet bowed.

'Citizens,' he said, 'I bow to your decision. It is impossible for me, nay, it would be unseemly, to remain when my name has been voted off the list of your committee. We have worked together through many a hard day. I trust we have done some

service to the State. My absence will cause no difference in your proceedings, nor would my presence prevent any of those ills which I foresee, but cannot prevent. Adieu then, *citoyens*! And do thou, Citoyen Nortier, remember that I shall be at home, when thou and thy master and tyrant require me!

With that he bowed again and with head erect left the room.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE ARMY.

THE invasion and threatened conquest of France created an excitement never equalled in history. All the enthusiasm of a military people was roused. All the best, and therefore bravest, among Frenchmen enrolled themselves for the defence of the country, and quickly a living rampart of patriots was opposed to the invading hosts. In the eyes of pedantic tacticians, who in those days still fought and manœuvred by the light of the great Frederic, these men might be viewed as an undisciplined rabble. But calculations founded on the experiences of past ages are doomed to be upset. Though their leaders were for the most part men of no experience, though doctors became generals and advocates commanded armies, though simple grenadiers in a year or two rose to the highest rank, these men, fired with Republican enthusiasm, charged positions deemed impregnable and gained victories in defiance of every rule of war. Without shoes they marched through mud and snow, half clad they braved the cold of winter, without rations they preserved their discipline in the midst of the luxuries of the thriving towns of Holland. They had but one idea—to hurl back the invaders of their country. The administration of that country they were content to leave to the Convention, they believed in the elected of the people. In their patriotism they consented to sacrifice their most trusted generals at the demand of the rulers in Paris. When St. Just or Baudot, both young men of twenty-five or twenty-six, came with authority from the Convention, the army gave them implicit obedience. They were as much under the spell of the guillotine as the *bourgeoisie* of Paris. Inspired by the ‘Marseillaise,’ these ‘enfants de la Patrie’ were not only willing to do and die, but were content to obey. Such were the materials which formed the armies that conquered Europe. As

yet the magic that worked such wonders under Napoleon was wanting. 'La Gloire' was yet unheard of. Men fought and died from duty, from love of their fatherland.

When the Comte de la Beauce, Capitaine Chardon, joined the army it was in a state of transition. The Colonel of the 7<sup>me</sup> Cavalerie was utterly unworthy of the post, a noisy, empty-headed nonentity. The hardships of the campaign had completely demoralised him. To keep up his spirits he had yielded to his natural craving for drink, and was usually under the influence of alcohol. He left the command to his Major, an honest rough Republican, who, without any experience, strove to do his best. It was Major Tamplin then that received Capitaine Chardon. When he saw the discipline the Capitaine had succeeded in establishing, when he perceived the way in which the men were handled, he rode up to the new comrade and offered his hand.

'Capitaine' . . . (here we omit two oaths neither elegant nor necessary), 'thou art the man we want. There is no one here who knows his business. Thou shalt teach us.'

Despite the oaths which interlarded each sentence of his conversation, there was an honesty about the man that pleased La Beauce. He took the proffered hand, and from that moment the men became fast friends. La Beauce soon found that Major Tamplin but spoke the truth. The other officers were mostly of the stamp of the worthy Major and were willing enough to yield to one who knew his business. The Colonel seldom appeared, when he did it was evident to all that he had better have refrained from showing himself.

It was the end of February, 1793, that La Beauce joined the army, which was then under Miranda during the temporary absence of Dumouriez. They were besieging the town of Maestricht. The 7<sup>me</sup> Cavalerie were on the left rear, and to them was entrusted the safety of the army. Their vedettes were supposed to cover the country and assure the main body against surprise. But the Colonel was quite easy in his mind. The enemy had been beaten, there was no fear of an attack. La Beauce when he called on this warrior tried to convince him that his duty was to send out scouts to ascertain the position of the enemy.

The Colonel gazed with a vacant stare of astonishment at the presumptuous Capitaine who dared to tender advice.

'Who art thou who presumest to know better than thy betters? I tell thee the enemy will not dare. Let the boys repose. Thou hast just joined, thou knowest not the fatigues we have suffered.

I myself am quite worn out with constant marchings and counter-marchings. We shall find the enemy when it suits our purpose to look for him. Are we not their match? Do they not know it? They won't trouble us, the cowards. Sit and drink a bottle with me.'

But La Beauce excused himself.

'No?' cried the Colonel; 'then go to the devil thine own way and trouble me not!' and the gallant officer having in his hospitable fervour filled two glasses, proceeded to empty them both.

La Beauce then tried the Major.

With many oaths the Major declared that he thought Capitaine Chardon was right, that he must be right, as he evidently knew more about the matter than he, the Major. But it was an undoubted fact that both men and horses needed rest, and he did not, without greater urgency, consider himself justified in disobeying his commanding officer.

The next day there was the same excuse. La Beauce, in despair, tried to get some of his men to volunteer, but he found that they too were not to be roused.

'See, Capitaine,' they cried, 'we have had a long march. Nothing presses; there are no commands from the Colonel, who is a good patriot and knows what the country requires. Leave us then in peace.'

On the morning of the third day La Beauce, attended by Durand, sallied forth as was his wont to see whether by himself he could gain any intelligence. It was the first of March, the country was covered with a mist. As they rode along they constantly halted to listen. Jean's old poaching habits were invaluable. His eyesight was of the keenest, and his sense of hearing miraculous. Like a well-trained hound he seemed to scent the danger from afar. With head erect and nostril dilated he sat on horseback in rapt attention. At length he whispered,

'I hear something there,' and he pointed eastward.

Rapidly they proceeded in the direction he had indicated. The morning sun was beginning to scatter the mists, so that, as they ascended a rise in the ground, they gained a more extensive view of the country round. Sure enough, along the high road to Maestricht they saw a long column of men, whose arms glinted in the sun. They could even hear the clink of the cavalry sabres, and at intervals they could distinguish the irregular roll of the artillery, as now it passed easily over the hard ground, and now

had to be dragged through the heavy mud. Having ascertained that the enemy were advancing along this road they galloped to the other high road more to the north. Again they found the enemy advancing. This was enough for La Beauce. With the greatest haste he galloped to the quarters of the regiment, and without even knocking entered the Colonel's presence.

The Colonel had apparently not long finished his morning's meal. On the table was a bottle of schnapps, and the flushed look of the gallant officer's face clearly showed that his had not been a dry meal. He looked up as his Capitaine entered his presence.

'Did I not say I was not to be disturbed?' he cried, leaning back in his chair and assuming a look of great importance.

'I ask your pardon, Colonel,' answered La Beauce with courtesy; 'the importance of my intelligence is my excuse for disturbing you.'

'Thou comest to tell me of the enemy,' laughed the Colonel: 'a good joke; thou hast the enemy on thy brain. The enemy indeed.'

'Nevertheless,' persisted La Beauce, 'it is my duty to inform you that the enemy in force are within a few miles of us.'

The Colonel started to his feet.

'To the devil thou and thy enemy!' he cried as he struck the table with his fist. 'What?' he asked, mistaking the noise of the jingling glasses for a human voice. He then looked round the room till his eye fell once more on La Beauce. 'What, art thou still there? dost thou know I have a great mind to place thee under arrest to save thee from thy nightmare, the enemy? It is such pestilent busybodies that ruin us. Enemy indeed! Come, clear out! Out! Out!' he shouted, pointing to the door.

'I've done my duty,' said La Beauce gravely. 'It is for you to do yours.'

'What wouldst thou have me do?' asked the other in a voice almost whining in its tones.

'The enemy are advancing——' began La Beauce.

'Enemy! Always the enemy!' shouted the Colonel with mighty wrath. 'Thou art mad! Ho! outside there, who's there? Will no one come? Out of this, *sortez! sortez!*' and with trembling hand he pointed again to the door.

Seeing there was nothing to be done, La Beauce bowed and retired. As he left the door he heard a suspicious chink as though a glass and bottle met.

He then tried the Major.

'The enemy are upon us!' he announced.

'Impossible!'

'Come and see for yourself!'

The Major swore terrible oaths. He could not believe the enemy could be so bold. But he mounted a horse and quickly followed his junior.

They had but a short way to go before the truth of the intelligence was only too manifest. The enemy's cavalry were seen working their way round to the left flank.

The Major swore still more.

'What is to be done?' he cried.

'Muster your men and send word at once to head-quarters.'

'And the Colonel?'

'Never mind the Colonel.'

The Major saw the soundness of the advice. He gave the necessary orders, the trumpets sounded, and the men, greatly grumbling, quickly fell in.

Roused by the noise the Colonel appeared at the door of his quarters. At first he hardly seemed to understand what was going on, but by degrees it dawned on him that his regiment was falling in without his orders.

'*Canaille!* dogs! what means this uproar? Who gave you these orders?' he shouted. 'Capitaine Chardon, I order thee under arrest. I'll have thee shot!'

His eye was bloodshot, his legs unsteady, and his dress disordered.

'Colonel,' answered La Beauce calmly, 'after the engagement you may do as you please. Meanwhile the safety of the army is of higher importance than your drunken indignation.'

'Drunken!' shouted the Colonel. 'D——d aristocrat! art thou to teach thy commanding officer? Mutinous hound!' and he drew from his belt a pistol and fired at his *Capitaine's* head. Luckily his aim was not true, and La Beauce escaped.

At that moment some dropping shots were heard, and several bullets 'pinged' against the walls of the house.

'*Sapristie!* It's true, after all!' cried the Colonel. 'Where's my sword! Bring me my sword! Charge, I say! Charge, brave 7<sup>me</sup>!' and he rushed in the direction of the enemy.

But his legs were too unsteady, and the Colonel measured his length on the ground.

They raised him up and carried him to the rear, kicking,

struggling, and swearing. There they gave him a bottle of the schnapps, in the drinking of which he found comfort, and soon lapsed into insensibility; and in that state was placed among the baggage.

Under the advice of La Beauce the Major drove in the advanced scouts of the enemy, and, having ascertained that a strong force was advancing, retreated to the main body. Alas! that main body, in spite of the intelligence sent to the head-quarters, was quite unprepared to receive the attack, and by the next day the whole army was in full retreat. Retreat soon became rout. The cry was raised that they were betrayed. Whole battalions dissolved, officers forsook their men, regiments disbanded and fled towards France; nor did the flying army rally till they reached Louvain, with the loss of seven thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

During these disasters La Beauce succeeded in keeping the 7<sup>me</sup> together. Men soon acquire a knowledge of the character of those placed in command. They quickly perceive in whom they can trust. And this rout taught the 7<sup>me</sup> that, in their new Capitaine, they had an officer who both knew his duty and fearlessly performed it. In the inquiry set on foot as to the cause of the disaster the part Capitaine Chardon had played was acknowledged, and Dumouriez himself deposed the drunken colonel, and placed Capitaine Chardon in temporary command of the regiment.

Strange to say, and this proved the honesty of the man, Major Tamplin hailed with delight the appointment of his junior to the chief responsibility.

‘My friend,’ he cried, not without oaths, ‘I’m right glad to be relieved of a duty for which I am unfit. I thought soldiering was a thing anybody could learn. I have found out my mistake; yet will I learn from thee.’

And he was as good as his word, and in the course of time France possessed no finer regimental officer than Major Tamplin.

It has been said by a great French writer that the armies of the Republic were never so much to be feared as after a check, that they became great through defeat. After the panic that succeeded the retreat from Maestricht, Dumouriez rallied his army, and brought them again to the attack in a few days. On the second of March they fled from Maestricht, on the eighteenth they assaulted the Austrian position at Neerwinden.

In the beginning of the battle the village of Neerwinden was stormed and taken by the Republicans, who in their turn were

driven from it by the concentrated fire of the Austrians. Again it was taken, and again the French had to retire. Drawn up a hundred yards from the village the lines of Dumouriez were preparing to renew the assault when the Austrians in their turn attacked. Two vast columns of Cuirassiers charged down on the French line, their helmets and cuirasses glinting in the afternoon sun. Bravely the gallant fellows rode down on their foes. Their right, meeting a terrific fire from the French artillery, were mowed down and stopped, but their left, slightly outflanking the French, caused the infantry to waver. At that moment the 7<sup>me</sup> under La Beauce charged their flank. Brilliantly led by their Colonel the gallant regiment dashed at the enemy. Their swords flashed and clanked against their mailed antagonists. The Cuirassiers doubled on their centre, fell into confusion, and checked their course. Gallantly they turned on their new foes. Hand to hand they fought stubbornly, though taken at a disadvantage. The 7<sup>me</sup> pressed them home. In front were the French infantry. Back fell the Cuirassiers in increasing confusion till retreat became flight, and those that had charged a gallant line, retired a disorderly mob.

No time for orders in such a charge. Their Colonel had charged at the head of his men; once in the *mêlée*, and he was as one of his troopers. Accustomed to the use of his sword, a wild madness seemed to possess him. Down went the Cuirassiers before his arm. There were points of weakness in spite of helmet and breastplate, and the cunning sabre of La Beauce sought out such places. Once a cut reached his own helmet, knocking it off his head and wounding him. He felt the hot blood trickling down his cheek, but the pain he did not feel; the man who struck him fell instantly. A stout soldier of the 7<sup>me</sup> was by his side, and to his sword was due that timely stroke. The Austrians wavered.

‘En avant!’ shouted the Colonel; ‘on, my children!’ And, seeing an officer trying to rally some Cuirassiers, he charged down on him.

The sword of the Colonel was raised to strike, but the officer as they met lowered his. Down came the French blade.

‘Etienne—you here!’ cried the other; and as he reeled from the blow his helmet fell from his head. It was St. Aubray!

The trooper who followed his Colonel here seized the bridle of the Cuirassier’s horse, and steadied the rider on his saddle.

‘What doest thou here!’ cried La Beauce, lowering his sword.

'I fight for my King—and thou?'

'I for my country.'

'Ride off if you would escape the guillotine,' muttered the trooper. 'Small mercy is shown to *émigrés*.'

St. Aubray recovered himself, and turning his horse galloped off.

'Jarnidieu!' shouted the trooper, in well-dissembled anger, 'he has escaped,' and, drawing a pistol from his belt, he fired after him. 'Missed him!' he cried. 'Are you hurt, Colonel?'

It was Jean Durand who, seeing many of the 7<sup>me</sup> coming to their aid, had saved the young man.

La Beauce managed for a time to direct the pursuit, but soon, fainting from loss of blood, was obliged to draw rein and seek the help of Jean.

In the rest of the field luck had not been on the side of the Republicans; the French left was utterly routed, and the right and centre, though they had held their own, were forced to retire. So was victory again on the side of the enemy. Then followed another retreat, which in its turn would have become a panic, had not the enemy, for some unaccountable cause, been very slack in following up the advantage they had gained.

La Beauce's wound was slight—a mere scalp wound; and, on being bound up, he was enabled to re-form his men and aid in the retreat. But the 7<sup>me</sup> suffered severely during the day, and were ordered to fall back to Douai to await reinforcements. While there rumours of treason reached them. They heard that Dumouriez was in correspondence with Cobourg. It was whispered that he wished to restore order in Paris and bring back the King. An officer, who came from head-quarters, called on Colonel Chardon, and in conversation sounded him on the subject. Chardon deplored the course of events at Paris, but he could not understand the restoration of a French king by the aid of Austrian bayonets. Such a government would be worse than the actual state of things. Moreover the thought of treason was peculiarly distasteful to him. He had of his own free will taken up arms for the Republic; he had a dread of foreign interference; he felt that France would not tolerate the restoration of an *émigré*. And so he told the officer sent by Dumouriez that he and his men would resist any proposition which gave the least shadow of suspicion of treason to the nation.

The next day Carnot unexpectedly appeared at Douai. He sought out Colonel Chardon and greeted him with great warmth of friendship.

'My dear Colonel, I bear to you the confirmation of your promotion. It is the only good bit of work General Dumouriez has done since he left Paris.' Bitterly he then spoke against the General. He, Carnot, had been sent by the Convention, with several other commissioners, to inquire into the recent disasters. The others had gone straight to head-quarters, but Carnot had determined to go round by Douai, to greet his old friend, and congratulate him on his conduct during the late battle. A very pleasant evening these two spent together. Carnot informed La Beauce that he could procure him a general's commission, that with his talents any promotion was within his reach, but that he thought it advisable, during the present uncertainty of public opinion, he should remain in command of his regiment.

'As a *ci-devant*,' he said, 'if you were raised to a position that might cause jealousy, you would be the object of grave suspicion; indeed, the late decree of the Convention would debar your serving at all. As it is you can do your duty, and no one but myself need know the truth.'

What was much more welcome to La Beauce was the account Carnot gave him of his wife and child. He had been to the Restaurant de la Grande Nation the day before he left, and had brought with him a letter from Virginie. In truth Carnot was noted for the care he gave to his friends during all this period of danger. These were safe, at least.

Early next morning grave news arrived at Douai; Dumouriez had arrested the other commissioners, and had surrendered them to the Austrians. Dumouriez was clearly a traitor! Great was the indignation of the troops at Douai. They desired to be led at once against this false patriot. Happily the next day news came that the General had fled, and, with the exception of a few Hussars of the Regiment de Berchigny, the army was true to the country.

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## CHAPTER XL.

### AN UNWELCOME APPEARANCE.

THE 7<sup>me</sup> Regiment was quickly brought up to its complement of men. During all these early wars of the Republic the Convention had no difficulty in finding recruits. The distress among the poorer classes was so acute that many enlisted from despair, many again from a desire to escape the dangers that threatened

them in Paris, and some few from enthusiasm. The Colonel quickly found the difference between these last recruits and those who had originally joined the regiment, burning with desire to repel the invaders of their country. As he watched the new men march past, he saw one whose face was familiar. He had all the swagger of an old soldier; though he looked half starved, his hat was still cocked with a rakish swagger over his sinister face, in which his one eye twinkled with a knowing look. It was Capitaine Pinard.

La Beauce was annoyed at seeing this man, who he felt sure would recognise him. His position among his officers was assured. They knew he must be a man of rank, as he had not concealed the fact that he had served in the royal army in America, at a time when no one who was not of the nobility could hope to rise higher than the rank of sergeant. Still he did not wish it to be known that he, the Comte de la Beauce, was serving under an assumed name, and he was fully aware that Pinard was not a man to be trusted with a secret from which he might hope to extract some advantage. Pinard's past was not one of which he could be proud, yet, in the Republican army, such disgraceful escapades as those in which he had been engaged were less likely to be ill viewed than the unpardonable offence, in Republican eyes, of being born an aristocrat, and owning an honourable title.

That very afternoon Pinard presented himself at his Colonel's quarters, sent up his name, and asked for an interview.

'Let him be admitted,' said the Colonel.

The one-eyed man entered the room and saluted.

'What do you desire?' asked La Beauce.

Pinard having carefully shut the door, stood once more before his Colonel and smiled.

'Colonel,' said he, 'I have had the honour of meeting you before.'

'Possibly.'

'When last I had the happiness of meeting Colonel Chardon he bore a more euphonious title.'

'It may be.'

'As an humble acquaintance of the Comte de la Beauce, may I be allowed to beg that my acquaintance with the Comte may plead with my Colonel?'

'What is it you want, Monsieur Pinard?' asked La Beauce with a smile.

'I desire, Monsieur le Comte, a commission in your gallant regiment.'

'Monsieur Pinard,' said the Colonel, 'I can give no commissions. I can recommend those who do their duty to my satisfaction to the proper authorities. That is all I have in my power.'

'Monsieur le Comte——'

'Excuse me. Be so good as to address me as Colonel Chardon. When your commanding officer calls himself by that name it is because he wishes to be so addressed.'

'Pardon, Colonel. I have served before, and in happier times have borne my King's commission. I feel myself therefore qualified——'

'My good sir, I am the judge. Do you do your duty, and I will promote you. Until then—until I see that you are worthy of confidence, I shall certainly do nothing even for an old acquaintance. Recollect there are some acquaintances of which a man is not proud.'

'*Diable!* Colonel, is a man's service to go for nothing?'

'When a man can produce proofs of good and efficient service it counts in his favour. Yours, M. Pinard, are of a kind that will not bear scrutiny.'

'And yours, M. le Comte?' said Pinard sarcastically.

La Beauce started to his feet.

'Ah! look here, my friend,' he said, striking the table with the cane he held in his hand, 'you seem to forget I am the Colonel of your regiment. Enough of this talk; I have told you all I can do for you, now go!'

Pinard scratched the side of his nose with some perplexity, then turned to leave the room.

'Citizen Pinard,' cried La Beauce, 'when you leave your superior's presence it is necessary to salute.'

Pinard turned and saluted correctly, but as he left the room there was an evil smile on his sinister countenance.

It was thus La Beauce determined to show his authority before this man. He did not fear him in the army, where, surrounded by the men with whom he had fought, he felt safe enough, but a man is easily denounced, and, in those days, denunciation led to the guillotine. He was one of those accustomed to think and act for himself on all occasions. If he could only see his way he was strong enough in his own confidence to do what he considered right. Yet the more he thought over his position, the more hope-

less it seemed to him. So, contrary to his custom, he determined to take counsel. Had Carnot been at Douai he probably would have sought his advice. The cares of his department had recalled Carnot to Paris. In his absence he determined to consult Major Tamplin, in the first place because the Major, though a rough man, was strictly honest; in the second, because he was a fiery Republican, and was therefore well acquainted with the men at head-quarters, before whom any denunciation would naturally come.

'*Diable !*' cried Tamplin, having heard the story, 'the case is serious. Dumouriez's defection has roused suspicions. The Convention are in a ferment, between Brissot and his tail, and Robespierre and Marat, and Danton and their lot. No denunciation must be made now. Better give this scoundrel rope; he'll hang himself before long, never fear. We can both keep our eyes on him, and at the first blunder—march—we will get rid of him.'

Tamplin spoke with energy; he paused for a minute, then he held out his hand to La Beauce.

'*Mon Colonel,*' he said, 'I am obliged to you for the confidence you have reposed in me. I am a Republican and fight for my republic; but then I am a peasant, you are a great noble. All the more merit to you for fighting in our cause. Nevertheless, your *sacré* name will be a stumbling-block with most patriots. To me it is a cause of additional respect—not that I admire aristocrats, I have fought them often enough—but because I admire you.'

La Beauce cordially embraced his worthy Major, and they went out together to see the new recruits at their exercise. Pinard had for once spoken the truth; he showed such acquaintance with his duties that La Beauce, having consulted with his Major, at once promoted him to the rank of sergeant. When he called him up and announced this to him, Pinard saluted, but said no word of thanks, nor did the hideous leer that illumined his one eye lead La Beauce to imagine that he was grateful. In fact he attributed his promotion to fear, and, in his heart, was determined further to blackmail his Colonel.

During the next three months the regiment was employed in the many harassing movements resulting from the want of success of the French army. Valenciennes, Mayence, Condé, all fell into the hands of the Austrians and their allies, the English. If anything was wanted to confirm La Beauce in the course he had taken in serving the Republic, it was the arrogant proclamation of the Austrians on taking these towns. It was in the name

of the German Kaiser that Cobourg took possession, it was to aggrandise him that French soil was conquered.

Under Houchard, doomed soon to the guillotine—not for want of success, for victory crowned his efforts, but for not making the most of it—the 7<sup>me</sup> Cavalerie fought at Hondschoote in September. Under Jourdain they joined in the ‘Marseillaise,’ as they charged and took the village of Wattignies, after a two days’ battle in October. Under Pichegru they went through all the campaign in Flanders and Holland.

It is not within the province of this book to narrate a history of the Republican war, any more than it was to give a history of the Revolution. It is sufficient to say that through all the chances of the war La Beauce remained safe. Jean Durand, though twice wounded, suffered no material harm. As for Pinard, it was found in the 7<sup>me</sup> that, though he talked of battles as though they were his natural element, he had no stomach for fighting, and showed better at the camp fire, over a pannikin of schnapps, than in a charge. It was remarked, too, that he generally took good care of himself; that as an old campaigner his quarters were of the best, and his fare the choicest. When the army were without shoes or clothing, Pinard had somehow excellent boots and a warm coat. While others lacked food, Pinard’s larder appeared inexhaustible. Rumours gained ground in the 7<sup>me</sup> that these things were not honestly obtained.

Now these Republicans, though they viewed an execution with indifference, were sticklers in matters of honesty, and so complaints were made to the Colonel. The watchful Major Tamplin had found that Sergeant Pinard had appropriated to himself what was intended to be shared among his comrades.

‘I said we should catch the rogue,’ said he with a chuckle to the Colonel. ‘I have some experience of rascals. Give them rope! give them rope!’

An example was necessary. Pinard was sent for and examined. His guilt was sufficiently proved. The man swaggered and swore his innocence. His restless eye glared at his Colonel; he expected La Beauce would excuse him. But Tamplin was allowed to conduct the inquiry, and the Colonel said nothing. Pinard was removed, and the sentence was deliberated among the officers.

A rough and ready justice then prevailed. Sentences required but little confirmation from head-quarters. Death was a light affair with these Republicans, who, from the General commanding down to the youngest soldier, were living under the shadow of

the guillotine. In this case death was thought too honourable; it was determined to drum Sergeant Pinard out of the regiment.

Pinard was buoyed by the idea of La Beauce's supposed cowardice. It was only when he was led out at daybreak one April morning, and found himself surrounded by his old comrades armed with straps and whips, when he saw before him the officers headed by Colonel Chardon, on whose face he saw no signs of relenting, that his heart failed him. The Colonel himself, in a firm voice, read the finding of the court. Sergeant Pinard was found guilty of conduct disgraceful to his position; his accounts were proved to be incorrect, he was therefore unworthy of the 7<sup>me</sup> Cavalerie. The sentence was that he should have his coat torn off him and be drummed out of the regiment.'

During the reading of this sentence Pinard recovered his audacity. As the Colonel finished he cried in a loud voice:

'Who art thou to sentence a good patriot? Comte de la Beauce, I denounce thee as an aristocrat!'

In Paris, where political excitement was intense, a denunciation of this kind would have at once led to serious consequences. Happily, in the army the feeling of good fellowship was more established, cemented as it had been by mutual suffering, by the hardships of many a long day and hard-fought field. Yet, even in the 7<sup>me</sup>, the dread of treason would at any time have caused a panic. But Major Tamplin rose to the occasion.

'Off with his coat!' he cried; 'who would believe such a man?'

In a moment Pinard was seized, his coat was torn off his back, he was kicked and cuffed, blows from stirrup-leather and whip rained on his shoulders. The man ran blindly hither and thither, not knowing where he went. All the old scores of the last few months were paid out. For Pinard had not been popular; a swaggerer and boaster, he had delighted to show his authority; when he had good cheer he seldom shared it; so the men of the 7<sup>me</sup> laid on with a will, till wounded, sore all over and half dead, Pinard found himself outside the camp, and crawled into a ditch for shelter.

Most men would have sunk under the punishment he had received and the shame of his sentence; but Pinard's was a tough hide, morally and physically. As most cowards he loved life dearly, and his determination to live stood him in good stead. In rags, covered with blood, he dragged himself from his ditch and crawled forth to the highway. His condition was sufficiently

pitiable to rouse charitable feelings even in an enemy. Pinard had a plausible tongue; he varied his piteous tale according to his audience. To some he was victim of those foul Republicans, who had punished him for showing mercy to the persecuted party of the King; more often he asserted he had been ill used by the enemies of his country; the English had vented their rage on a patriot who had refused to bow to their insular brutality. Whomever he met he had some means of rousing his pity. So he made his way day by day to Paris, struggling along the road with a heroism worthy of a better motive. Pinard had but one object in life, one absorbing passion gave him strength—hatred, hatred of La Beauce. He forgot his sufferings in the hope of revenge. What mattered if every step towards Paris was taken with pain and anguish? What were discomfort and nausea? Paris! Paris! was before him! There he would hope for revenge! On then! ever on! If only he could get to Paris!

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## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE CAFÉ.

DURING this time Jacques le Blanc and his charges had been living as quietly as possible. The business of the Grande Nation showed no falling off. If the people, nearly starved, had to spend hours waiting their turns at the bakers' ropes to get their regulated pittance of indifferent bread, the National Representatives, who could afford it, had no desire to stint themselves. Some there were, no doubt, who either from frugal tastes or deep policy led the lives of anchorites. Robespierre lodged over a small furniture shop hard by in the Rue St. Honoré, and was ever abstemious in his diet. St. Just, his most trusted lieutenant, nourished himself, it was said, on broth worthy of a Spartan citizen. But Barrère, Danton, and others were fond of the pleasures of the table. They laughed at the simple fare of these two men, attributing their abstinence to their bilious temperament, for they were both yellow and sickly in complexion. Yet it cannot be doubted that this simplicity of life gave both Robespierre and St. Just a great popularity with the *sans-culottes*, while the free living of Danton and many of his supporters was illviewed by the people. Their luxury naturally

appeared odious to a starving mob, while the ostentatious display of wealth of some was not above suspicion.

One day Citizen Carnot came to the café, when the attentive Jacques presented himself to take his orders. Carnot, looking round as though he expected to see her, asked 'Does a Madame Chardon not live here?'

Jacques darted a glance of distrust at his questioner, whom he had not recognised.

'Have no fear,' said Carnot. 'My name is Carnot.'

Jacques, much relieved, placed his fat palm on his heart and bowed.

'Monsieur,' he said, 'madame is my daughter.'

'Good,' said Carnot, 'I will see to your safety. Capitaine Chardon is a good officer. Meanwhile, my friend,' he whispered, 'it would be well if Madame Chardon were to appear more in public. Let her assist you in your business. Secrecy creates suspicion.'

Jacques bowed again. 'The wishes of Citoyen Carnot shall be obeyed. Does he wish to see my daughter?'

'Not to-day. Let her be here when I next come—say to-morrow.'

No more was said. Le Blanc that evening confided M. Carnot's desire to Virginie, and it was arranged she should have a desk or *comptoir*, at which she might occasionally sit, helping in making the accounts and other slight matters. Jacques trembled to think of the effect that might be produced by his beautiful daughter, but he recognised the necessity, and said not a word to frighten or dissuade her.

To Virginie this public appearance was extremely distasteful. She disliked the people who frequented her father's café, and dreaded exposing herself to possible insult. But she too saw the wisdom of the course suggested. As Madame Chardon she might be expected to do much which would be impossible to Madame la Comtesse de la Beauce.

So next day, clad in a simple dress of black, she took her place. Many of those who saw her were struck by her beauty and grace, and asked Le Blanc where he had procured such a pearl. Le Blanc simply answered she was his daughter, the wife of Capitaine Chardon, now serving with the 7<sup>me</sup> Cavalerie.

At mid-day Carnot came in with Barrère, and one or two notables of the Convention. He gravely asked Jacques whether the lady was Madame Chardon, and on being told he was right

advanced with a courtly air, and, saluting her, said in a loud voice so that all in the restaurant could hear him:—

‘Citoyenne Chardon, I have good news from the Capitaine Chardon. The 7<sup>me</sup> Cavalerie behaved splendidly at Maestricht. I have great pleasure in announcing that the Capitaine, who was slightly wounded on that occasion, has been appointed Colonel of the regiment in which his services have already been very marked, both in organising and in the field. I am delighted, madame, to convey this good news to you. I wish we had more officers like him.’

He bowed and rejoined his friends. His words, heard by all in the room, which was then quite full, at once established the position of Virginie. She herself could only smile and bow her gratitude. As the war on the frontier progressed with varying fortune, Carnot seldom failed to bring timely news to Virginie of the safety of her husband. Letters came from time to time but they were meagre and constrained. Both the Comte and his wife had been duly warned by Rousselet of the necessity of extreme circumspection in their correspondence, and it had been agreed between them that great reticence was to be employed. Letters went astray, and the spies of those in power were always on the watch for the treason so much dreaded by all. So with her usual sweetness and resignation Virginie was content with the veriest crumbs of intelligence. Citoyen Carnot’s news was therefore very welcome as it came greatly in anticipation of La Beauce’s letters.

During all this time Virginie led a quiet and even contented life. She had trust in her religion which, during the absence of her loved husband, afforded her boundless consolation; after the duties of the day she and Célimène, who now shared with her the duties of the café, would pray together for their absent soldier, and their mingled tears in private enabled them bravely to appear unmoved before the world.

Oh, blessed relief to a woman’s feelings! The brave-hearted Madame Roland herself, whose courage even to the guillotine supported the weakness of the poor wretch condemned with her to death—even Madame Roland, with the fortitude of a Spartan hero, was reported by the female warder of the prison to spend two or three hours each day in tears gazing from her window. Dry-eyed and lion-hearted in the presence of suffering, torture and death, who knows the tears that have been shed in private to bring about this outward calm? In gathering the autumn

fruits and harvest, who reflects on the silent rains of spring that have produced the golden crop?

So lived these two women, keeping their cares to themselves, and appearing, before even Jacques, with serene countenances and smiling lips. But Jacques himself was a changed man. He was of so impressionable a type, that it may easily be imagined the dread of denunciation in which he lived entirely destroyed his nerves. The responsibility he had undertaken in the matter of his daughter and grandson was very great. He was restless and timid. All his former Republican ideas had fled. They had followed his old doctrine of easy-going tolerance. Now he had but one all-pervading feeling—fear. Not that he neglected his business. In the discharge of his duties he felt he possessed the best antidote to denunciation. Who would take an honest cook in red night-cap and culinary attire for an aristocrat—the father of a comtesse? Were not his clients the very cream of patriotism? So he, with a cunning hardly to be expected in so honest-looking a man, contrived to be civil to all; not keeping to one *citoyen* or politician, but making friends with every shade of patriotism. The impatience and violence Jacques used so frequently to display had disappeared, or were shown only very seldom to his underlings. For Jacques was sensible of the fact that denunciation came principally from the inside of a house. It was the viper cherished in the bosom that generally turned and stung. So, with an effort, he was almost polite to his people. Relieving his feelings now and again by scolding and abusing Pierre, who had followed his fortunes from Sèvres to Paris, and who was so used to the violence of the *patron* that he paid no attention to his temper. Indeed Pierre once came to Virginie and whispered:

‘Madame, I fear the Citoyen Father is ill.’

‘Why, Pierre, he does not complain, and looks well this morning!’

‘See,’ murmured Pierre, ‘it is two days since he has sworn, and nearly a week since he has lost his temper; it’s not natural. I know the *patron*. See to it, madame,’ and Pierre seeing Jacques approach glided away.

Happily that very day Pierre returned with a grin.

‘It is all right, madame—Maitre Jacques is quite himself.’

With his daughter and Célimène Jacques was sweetness itself. Célimène was a special favourite. He seemed to understand her better than he did Virginie. The power of suppressing her feel-

ings which the latter possessed was quite incomprehensible to Jacques, while the confiding disposition of Célimène found an echo in the expansive nature of the honest man.

‘Ah, mademoiselle,’ he said one day, ‘if I were only young again and the Revol—things I mean quieter——’ and he put his hand to his heart and cast an amorous glance at the girl.

‘Père Jacques!’ answered Célimène laughingly, ‘there is saving power in that little “if” that takes all the compliment out of your declaration. You know you would no more dare to give Virginie a step-mother, than you would——’ and she stopped with pretty hesitation.

‘Than I would what?’ asked Jacques grinning.

‘Than you would give Citoyen Barrère a *sauce piquante* without a *soupçon* of garlic.’

‘Ah, traitress,’ laughed Jacques, shaking his fat finger menacingly, ‘it is thus you reveal the secrets of my art!’

Louison was another source of anxiety. That bustling creature, perfectly happy now she had to be sole domestic to her loved mistress, could with difficulty be persuaded to believe in the necessity for the change of names. To her Virginie’s title was very dear, for she firmly believed that it was entirely through her that her mistress had made this marriage. She hated the Republicans with a terrible hatred. ‘The *canaille*,’ she muttered to herself, ‘not contented with having guillotined the King, they would kill my master and mistress, and even rob the poor innocent child of his name!’ It was only after many scoldings that she dropped the boy’s title. She could understand the danger to madame, but surely the boy—— It was only on hearing the fate of the poor Dauphin she was convinced; but from that time in the presence of strangers, before whom she was wont to be most garrulous, she became obstinately mute.

In the café itself both Virginie and Célimène had many adorers. Citoyen Barrère always had a complimentary speech for the two ladies, and would hover round the *comptoir* at which they were wont to preside casting amorous glances at them. He even wrote highly poetical love-letters to Virginie, but they were received with such coldness that he was heard to remark that snow was never more cold than Citoyenne Chardon, and that it did him good in the heat of political life to seek from time to time the icy chill that struck through his heart when she gazed at him.

‘All the same,’ he would add good-humouredly, ‘Citoyenne

Chardon is a lovely creature, and Carnot the only man who can make her smile—a most lucky fellow.’

Others there were who, with the brutality of ill-educated *sans-culottism*, pushed their attentions to the verge of insult. But Virginie’s calm dignity disarmed even these would-be amorous patriots, and she was supported by the consideration she had won from the *habitués* of the house, who were all aware that her husband was bravely battling the enemies of the Republic.

Of Rousselet they had seen nothing for some time. Jacques himself was rather uneasy on his behalf.

‘*Ma chère*,’ he said one day to Virginie, ‘I do not understand our friend. He has bound me by the most solemn promises not to go to see him. He has reason to think that he is “suspect,” and that his presence among us might lead us into danger. The brave fellow!’ said Jacques with a sigh, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand; ‘we owe so much to him; yet will he let us know nothing about his doings.’

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE ‘SUSPECT.’

ONE morning, before Virginie was quite dressed, Jacques tapped impatiently at her door. She let him in. He was pale and trembling, and sank into a chair. Virginie ran to him, asking what ailed him.

‘My daughter,’ he gasped, ‘Rousselet——’ He could say no more, being overcome with emotion. He had a letter in his trembling hand which he held out to her. Virginie took it and read:

‘My Friend,—The Republic which we both have striven to serve will need many victims before the truth of the sentiments we uphold are acknowledged. I do not grudge my life in the cause. Last night at the Jacobins I spoke up for mercy and pity. I dared to oppose even Robespierre. I need say no more. You will never see your friend again. It is because I would not drag you, and those infinitely dear ones who would fall with you, to a like fate, that I have these months past refrained from often seeing you. I have even spread a report that we were not friends. If the report should reach you, pardon it. It is as true as many of the things one hears in these days, which is as much as to say it is an unutterable lie. My sentiments towards you, you know,

also those I have never acknowledged towards your daughter. She has in these latter days brought me to see much that was good and beautiful in humanity, for which she has my heartfelt thanks. She and her brave husband are worthy of each other. The prayer she breathed through the lips of her little child still echoes in my ears. It will be heard when I mount the steps of the guillotine. It may, such is the effect it has produced on me, waft me to that great Republic free from sins and traitors, in that endless hereafter in which it has almost taught me to believe.

THY FRIEND.

Then, in a hurried postscript :—

‘My friend, bid your family live quietly as they are doing ; make no show of wealth. Riches are fatal attractions to the envious, and they are in power. Make no sort of effort to avert the doom that hangs over me ; it would do me no good, and but serve to lose you. Your life is dear to your family ; mine is a debt I freely pay to the Republic, the only family I own. I send with this the Sèvres vase, which, in happier circumstances, once stood in her room. Let it remind you both of a friend who loved you, and will shortly cease to exist. Above all, destroy this evidence of friendship from one whom to know will shortly be a crime.’

Neither letter nor postscript was signed, and the last sentence was deeply underlined to enforce attention.

Virginie in reading this letter was much moved. In every line of it she read this man’s deep love for her, in every word a proof of his utter unselfishness. Could she have loved him ever ? Was this man so unlovable that he must go through life in lonely solitude ? Alas ! what waste of love there is here below ! How many are there whose love is misplaced and unreturned ! How many more whose passion is even unperceived ! In the great hereafter will it not be true that much shall be pardoned to those who have loved much ?

If Rousselet could have seen the tears in Virginie’s eyes and have read her thoughts, he would not perhaps have been so reconciled to the sacrifice he was making to his cruel goddess, the Republic. Wiping the tears away, Virginie laid her hand on her father’s shoulder.

‘Father,’ she said, ‘is there no hope for him ?’

‘Thou hast read,’ sobbed Jacques, ‘thou hast read. And Rousselet is a man who does not lightly write ; he knows what we do not. Poor Rousselet !’ and the poor fellow sobbed again,

'And where is the Sèvres vase?'

'*Sapristi!*' cried Jacques, starting up. 'Idiot that I am, I have left it downstairs! That Pierre, with hands of lead, will break it without fail,' and, forgetting his grief with the thought of something to do, he ran out of the room.

Virginie was reading the letter once more, as well as her tears would allow, when Célimène and the boy entered the room.

'*Bon jour, ma mère!*' cried the boy.

Virginie, in a paroxysm of tears, snatched him into her arms and covered him with kisses. She, at least, had someone to love and live for, and, please God, in the midst of all these terrible events, she would strive for their sake to escape the perils around.

Célimène, when she too had read the letter was hardly less affected than Virginie. In those days when all France was hysterical, the cruelest form of suffering arose from the necessity of concealing the feelings, which French nature too generally expresses without restraint. In public, emotion had to be suppressed, but in private tears flowed freely; and these two were bathed in tears, while little Jacques looked on wonderingly, himself on the point of howling his infantine sympathy, when Jacques le Blanc re-entered the room with the Sèvres vase.

'See, Virginie! by the mercy of God, those brigands have spared the gift of our dear friend. Ah, what a friend he was!' he cried, talking of him as though he were already dead.

'Father,' said Virginie, 'something must be done. It is an injustice! M. Rousselet was too good a patriot to be guilty of anything worthy of this fate.'

'Alas!' said Jacques, mournfully, 'they take the best stuff to make the Republican *consommé*.'

'Cannot you ask your friend Barrère,' cried Célimène. 'They say he has power in the State, and he would do much for you.'

But the cautious Jacques protested. 'Barrère!' he cried, 'ask Barrère? the libertine Barrère! Put thyself under a debt of gratitude to him! Besides, take notice of what Rousselet says.'

'It is worth a thought,' said Virginie, seriously.

'*Ma fille!*' cried Jacques, 'thou wilt cause us all to perish. Recollect that it is said "to take an interest in one who is suspect is to be suspect oneself."'

'My father,' said Virginie, firmly, 'depend on it, we will not act foolishly, for all our sakes,' and she again clasped her son to her heart.

‘But,’ cried Jacques, still a prey to anxiety, ‘my dearest girl, just consider——’

Virginie rose from her chair. ‘Come, father,’ she said, ‘it is time we went to work,’ and, taking her father by the arm, she led him downstairs, expostulating as he went.

On arriving at the door of the café Virginie turned to her father, saying, ‘Father, have no fear, I shall not compromise thee, or myself.’

‘My daughter,’ answered Jacques, ‘for myself I have no fear. It is the charge left by monsieur thy husband that makes me anxious.’

To do the good man justice he spoke but the truth, and Virginie knew it. She kissed him fondly, and then entered the café to take her usual place at the *comptoir*; Jacques did not appear immediately, and his eyes were red when he entered the room.

All day he was a prey to anxiety. He fidgeted about the rooms, he scolded his servants, he was frequently at the door looking out into the street, in fact he showed his nervous irritability in a thousand ways; while Virginie, quite as anxious really, sat apparently unmoved at her post, occupied, when her duties left her any leisure, in some domestic needlework. It was only when the door opened and some fresh arrival made his appearance that she glanced up. Barrère did not come that day.

Once when Jacques was at the door, gazing anxiously up and down the street, he saw in the distance the well-known form of Rousselet approaching. He trembled violently at the sight, for he had brought himself to believe that his friend had already been arrested. Rousselet was, in fact, returning from his dismissal at the committee-rooms of the section. He could not resist an opportunity of once more gazing at the house where Virginie lived. As he approached, he saw Jacques le Blanc at his door, and deliberately crossed over the street to avoid giving him an opportunity of addressing him. When Jacques made a movement as though he would have gone to him, Rousselet gave him a frowning look, and with his hand motioned him not to move. So he passed, never turning his eye towards the home of her he loved, looking straight before him, with apparently unmoved countenance, while the whole man was trembling inwardly with suppressed emotion. Jacques gazed after him, unable, poor weak fellow, to conceal his thoughts. ‘What a man!’ he muttered to himself as he furtively rubbed his eyes with the back of his hand.

When he turned to re-enter his house he was as pale as his linen jacket. He walked straight to Virginie.

'What hast thou seen, my father?' she whispered, anxiously.

'Him,' whispered Jacques.

Virginie got down from her seat without a trace of hurry, and walked to the door. She opened it, and going out, held out her hand as though to feel if it rained. She then quickly looked up the street. At that moment Rousselet was crossing to go down the street in which he lived. He glanced round towards Jacques' house and saw the figure at the door. He knew who it was, and a sad smile came on his careworn face. He did not stay his pace or quicken it. With the same set purpose he marched towards his house, to his coming arrest, and certain death.

Virginie too had seen Rousselet. While he was visible she watched him, then as she turned into the house she again muttered, 'God watch over him!' She appeared unmoved as she returned to her old station, only she did not resume her work which lay untouched on her lap, and, as she remained wrapped in thought, she smiled. Poor Rousselet! She was thinking of her husband!

Meanwhile Rousselet, having purchased the things necessary for his homely meal, ascended to his solitary room, and spent the day in deep thought.

Truly to him the Republic had fallen. Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety were worse tyrants than the old monarchy itself. It is true these men pretended to do everything in form. Each man who was denounced was brought before a tribunal, and tried before a jury, who pronounced on his guilt. Alas! who would trust the jury appointed by the Committee of Public Safety, and authorised, as in the case of the Girondins, to close the trial when they considered themselves sufficiently informed? Rousselet had no hope from them. As he paced up and down his small room he called to mind his aspirations and hopes. All his old doubts reappeared, all his disappointments became more intense. If Rousselet had been a more ambitious man personally, he would perhaps have felt his position more keenly; as it was, it was for the Republic he cared, not for himself. It mattered little to him that he personally had failed in moving the Jacobins Club, or that he personally had been expelled from the committee of his section. What was he and his life to the great cause? He gloried to think that his death might have a greater influence than his efforts while he lived. Was it not 260,000 heads the 'divine' Marat demanded? Had not Marat

a greater perception, a keener insight into the politics of the time than all these his followers, who rose to greater power on his death? Might not his head make up the tale? Thoughts that had previously floated vaguely in his brain seemed now to take form and substance. It did not seem hard for him to die. To pass from this world which seemed so bitter and perverse, even to the state of annihilation, was a gain; and if there was a future state——? Pshaw! a story for children! More wise to prepare like a man for the worst. Rousselet glanced round his room to see if there was anything there to create suspicion. He looked over his papers—few in number, for he was not a writer but a worker. No, there was nothing; he was ready.

So he laid himself down and slept peacefully, nor did he wake till he heard a knocking at his door. He rose and opened. It was Nortier with some gendarmes. It was still night, and their lanterns cast a weird light through the little room.

‘Enter,’ said Rousselet; ‘I have been expecting you. Allow me time to dress.’

He never asked to see the warrant for his arrest. He doubted not these were in order. Silently he placed a chair for his enemy (who was clad in a municipal scarf), and busied himself with his toilette. Nortier seemed in spite of his effrontery more discomposed than he. ‘Hurry yourself,’ he muttered rudely.

‘Allow me to appear as I have always appeared,’ answered Rousselet. ‘I should be sorry the people should think such affairs are hurried.’

Nortier said no more, but glared round the room. Possibly he thought this Rousselet, denounced as the hireling of Pitt, might have had a more luxurious lodging. Here were no cupboards to ransack, no costly escritoirs on which to affix the municipal seals. Everything was bare and simple. The guards stood by silent. There was not a sound except the slight noise caused by the ‘suspect’ himself, as he brushed his coat and pulled on his boots. At length when all was ready Rousselet from his pocket produced a pistol, which he handed to Nortier.

‘Monsieur le Municipal,’ he said, ‘had better charge himself with this arm; necessary for the safety of a free citizen, but an object of suspicion in the possession of a “suspect.”’

Nortier was taken aback, and handling the pistol very clumsily fired it off.

‘Imbecile!’ cried Rousselet. Luckily there was no harm done, so, turning to his guard, he cried almost gaily, ‘*Allons, mes amis,*

all is ready, let us descend.' They descended the staircase. At the door of some of the apartments appeared pale and scared faces. No one offered to recognise the 'suspect.' In the courtyard stood the *concierge*.

'Ah, *citoyen*,' she cried, 'who would have thought this?'

'I, *citoyenne*,' answered Rousselet with a smile.

At the door was a coach, which he entered quickly. Nortier and two gendarmes followed him, and they rolled off to the *Conciergerie*, while little Victor and some of the neighbouring *gamins* raised a shrill cheer!

On the same morning a stout figure passed and repassed several times the door of the house in which Rousselet had lived. The boy still played before the door, beheading small objects with the guillotine to his great satisfaction. Lumps of mud he formed into a rough semblance of the human form, and, placing them beneath the miniature blade, down it came and they fell in two, and the boy clapped his hands and laughed.

Presently the stout figure stopped. The boy looked up. 'Works it not well this morning, *citoyen*?' he cried; 'see, the *fournée* is complete: thirty-six "suspects," all of a row! Samson could not have done better,' and he clapped his hands and pointed to the lumps of mud, fit symbols of the inanimate forms they were intended to represent.

'Livest thou in this house, little man?' asked the stout man, whose face looked lilac where it ought to have been red.

'That I do,' answered the child; 'my mother is *concierge*.'

'And does a *Citoyen Rousselet* live here?'

The boy looked up from his occupation; he was remoulding the mud for another *fournée*.

'He did live here. Last night he was taken away. He gave me cakes, he will give no more.' Then making a new figure of mud—'*Citoyen Rousselet*!' he cried. 'Approach, *vlan*!' Down fell the blade and the clay head separated from its trunk.

'Bravo, it works well, the guillotine, does it not?'

He looked up; the stout man had gone. It was Jacques le Blanc.

'And I never asked him for a cake!' cried the boy in disgust.

(To be continued.)

## Nero and St. Benedict.

AT first sight it might well seem that nothing could be more fantastic and arbitrary than the juxtaposition of two such names as those of Nero and St. Benedict; and, indeed, they serve as types of character and civilisation which are opposed to each other by the most absolute antithesis. Yet there is one spot in Italy—a place which is of overwhelming interest on many different grounds—which brings before us in sharp and immediate contrast the memories of the Christian saint and of the Pagan Emperor. That spot is Subiaco.

The name of NERO has passed into a by-word upon the lips of mankind. He stands forth to early Christians, on the page of the Book of Revelation, as the Wild Beast from the Sea, couched upon the Seven Hills, and wallowing in the blood of the Saints, whose name in Hebrew characters gives us 666—the mystic number of the Antichrist. He stands forth on the page of history as the man in whose person the imposthume of Cæsarism came to its head. His records are among the *pièces justificatives* of the progressive triumph of the Gospel over the deeds of darkness and the passions of dishonour, which found in him their most cynical and shameless representative. We see in him ‘the dregs of Epicurus;’ the product of Paganism in its vilest decadence; the outcome of an age which St. Paul portrayed in such lurid colours on the first page of the Epistle to Romans. He gave to mankind the spectacle of a ‘deified *gamin*,’ utterly worthless and utterly corrupt, yet endowed with all the riches and splendour of the world, and enthroned upon the dizziest pinnacle of its adoration. He was the crowned helot who, for the warning of all time, showed to what abysses of degradation a human soul can sink in the attempt to live without a conscience; in insolent defiance of every precept of the natural and moral law, having no hope, and without God in the world.

ST. BENEDICT, on the other hand, marks a culminating point in

that crisis of the Church's existence when, having converted the Roman Empire, she herself began to incur the peril of corruption; and when, in the rushing waves of the sea of barbarians which poured over Europe from the frozen tundrs of Scythia and the dark forests of Germany, it seemed but too certain that all religion and all civilisation would be hopelessly swept away. He stands forth as the noblest type of that 'disciplined life,' of that Christian cœnobitism, which was one of the chief of God's appointed instruments to strengthen the great wings of pureness and kindness by which the Church sustained herself in a purer air than that of the world around her. His life gave the lie to the infamous surmise of Nero that no living man was, or could be, pure. He manifested 'the irresistible might of weakness which shook the world.' He showed that nothing is so powerful, nothing so fruitful, nothing so ennobling as self-sacrifice. In that famous interview in which the heroic Totila, who had disguised himself in vain, was overawed by his reproofs and prophecies, St. Benedict typified that coming victory in which the rudest of barbarians, confronted only by defenceless holiness, were yet compelled to bow down before the banner of a moral idea and the supremacy of a spiritual force. In an epoch of infernal splendour and voluptuousness the last of the Cæsars used his awful autocracy to show human nature at its vilest, and to precipitate the ultimate ruin of the institutions of the old world. In an epoch of heresy, disaster, and impending destruction, an innocent and helpless boy fled from temptation to the wild cave which was to become the cradle of Western monasticism. That cave was 'the nest of the eagle and the dove from which issued, with the rule and institution of St. Benedict, the flower of Christian civilisation, the permanent victory of the soul over the flesh, the intellectual enfranchisement of Europe, and all that charm and grandeur which the spirit of sacrifice, regulated by faith, adds to knowledge, labour, and virtue.'<sup>1</sup> Nero, in the orgies of despotism and luxury, in the mingling of all the blood and mud of natural viciousness, during a career in which, as on Solomon's Mount of Corruption, 'lust was hard by hate,' degraded humanity, plunged himself into horrible retribution, and shook down the bases of Empire. St. Benedict, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings and fastings, in cold and nakedness, upheld the tottering pillar of faith and civilisation, and breathed fresh hopes into a dawning world.

<sup>1</sup> Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, ii. 12.

The memories of the Christian saint and the Pagan sybarite are (as I have said) commingled at Subiaco.

The cradle of the river Arno—of which the lovely cascades delight the traveller at Tivoli—is to be found some fifty miles west of Rome, among mountains through which it has hollowed a deep and rocky gorge which formed the borderland between the Sabines and the Æquians. The torrent dashes through these walls of rock, between hills clothed with verdure, until, after many a fall, it reaches Subiaco. The name is a corruption of *Sublaqueum*, and is derived from the fact that Nero, with that love of the picturesque which was the most innocent side of his extravagant æstheticism, had here dammed up the rushing stream so as to form three delicious lakes, beside which, and on both sides of the river, he built two villas, connected by a bridge like that which now spans the gorge, and from which the traveller gazes down upon the river foaming two hundred and forty feet below. The charm of the spot lay for Nero in its loveliness and seclusion—

Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,

Hic nemus umbriferum ; hic tecum consumerer ævo.

In what is ridiculously called 'the golden quinquennium' of Nero's reign, he was not yet so steeled to shamelessness as to be indifferent to the censures which fell on him amid the glare and publicity of Rome. He was glad, as Horace had been, to retire from the feverous autumn and burning summer to a scene secluded as the Capræ of Tiberius, where, unobserved by any but the kindred spirits which he gathered round him, he could glut himself in all shamelessness and folly. To fish with golden hooks, attached to lines of purple ; to bathe with impudent irreverence in the *fons cœruleus* (from which the Marcian aqueduct of Claudius conveyed the Aqua Virgo to Rome), in order, as he said, that the Roman people might have the privilege of drinking water which had tinged his imperial limbs ; to fill his gardens with strange animals and birds—these were comparatively harmless vagaries. But here, also, he surrounded himself with those dissolute and greedy parasites, buffoons, and eunuchs, which degraded the Palace of the Cæsars with Eastern infamies ; and in the enchanting gardens of this mountain villa, amid torch-light which only served to intensify the shadows of the dense foliage, were enacted in privacy some of his earlier extravagancies of vice. They were the beginning of the orgies wherewith, under the impulse of Tigellinus, he afterwards shocked and dis-

gusted whatever was left of the moral sense in that corrupted capital of the world, which was full, not only of pearls, and scarlet, and thyine-wood, and ivory, and marble, and silk, and cinnamon, but also of slaves and souls of men.<sup>1</sup> Year after year the imperial *cortège* might have been seen streaming, to the number of a thousand, from the gates of Rome. The chariot in which the Emperor lolled was inlaid with ivory and silver, and the sumpter-mules, which carried the inexhaustible resources of his luxury, were shod with gold. The muleteers were dressed in liveries of the finest Canusian wool, dyed scarlet. The swarthy cohort of Mazacan outriders shone in bracelets and trappings of gold. Many of the slaves had no other duty than to carry the lyres and other musical instruments, which were required for theatrical entertainments, and all the more delicate and beautiful of them had their faces covered with masks or smeared with cosmetics, lest the sun should spoil the beauty of their complexions. But, while here, as everywhere, Nero was disgracing the nature and name of man, the vengeance of Heaven did but slumber. Omens of evil were not wanting, and once, in A.D. 61, while he feasted at this Sublacensian villa, a storm reverberated among the hills, and the table at which he was feasting—according to one account, the golden goblet which he held in his hand—was struck by the electric flame, terrifying his guilty soul, and scarcely sparing his forfeit life.

Of all this grandeur and guilt there is now hardly a vestige. In the year 1430, perhaps in consequence of earthquakes, the artificial lakes of Nero—of which the tradition still remains in the name *bagni di Nerone*, given to some *débris* on the right side of the river—were swept away by the bursting of the dykes. There are some shapeless ruins, probably the remains of a Nymphæum, overlooking the lovely expanse of water, but nothing else remains of Nero's magnificent structures except the bases of his bridge, the fragments of marble mosaics, broken columns of porphyry and giallo antico, the fine torso of an athlete, and a few other broken statues and bas-reliefs preserved in the cloisters of Sta. Scolastica, or thence removed to the Vatican at Rome.

The thousands of pilgrims who, in age after age, have visited Subiaco have been attracted thither not by the ruins of Nero's villa, or even by the beauty of the scene, but solely by the memories of St. Benedict, and by the desire to visit the Sagro Speco of which Petrarch said that 'those who have seen it believe

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xviii. 11-13.

that they have seen the gates of Paradise.' Four centuries after Nero had expiated his crimes by shameful suicide, the same Via Valeria and Via Sublacensis which had witnessed the gorgeous parade of his voluptuousness, saw a solitary boy, who, at the age of fourteen, had fled to escape temptation from the allurements of Rome. He was of noble birth; on the mother's side the last scion of the old Sabine lords of Nursia, and on the father's of the ancient house of the Anicii. None but his old nurse had followed his flight, and when multitudes began to flock round him, from the fame of a miracle which he was believed to have wrought, he left her also, and plunged into these remote fastnesses, which had long been abandoned to silence. He passed the huts of the Sublacensian peasants, and climbed the savage solitudes of the mountain, until he came to a mass of overhanging rock, beneath the shadow of which was a sunless cave overgrown with wild thickets. It had once, perhaps, been an oracle of the god Faunus. None knew of his whereabouts except a single monk, Romanus, who had met him and given him a hair shirt and coat of skins. Unable to reach his cavern among the precipitous cliffs and tangled growth of underwood, Romanus daily let down to him a basket which contained such fragments of bread as remained over from his own scant fare. Here the solitary boy lived for three whole years in vigil, fast, and prayer. Yet even so, and perhaps all the more from the morbid concentration of thought upon his own perils in a frame weakened by emaciation, he was so far from being exempt from temptation that his thoughts often and involuntarily reverted to a maiden whom he had seen and loved in Rome. To cure himself of these backward glances at the world, he adopted an heroic remedy. Beside his cave was a bed of thorns, and, stripping himself of his robe of skin, he rolled his naked body in the thorns, and so by extremity of anguish cured himself for ever from the impulses which horrified his tender conscience. To this day, beside the holy cave, the traveller will be shown in the monastery garden the scene of this event. And on the wall, which enclosed the garden, the boy's penance is represented in a fading fresco, with the words

*Flammata mens divinitus*

*Extinxit ignes ignibus.*

Now, however, the thorn-bed is a bed of thornless roses. In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi visited this holy ground, watered it with his tears, and planted two roses there. They have completely triumphed over the thorns. The dust of their flowers is supposed

to produce marvellous cures for the faithful, and a sort of little serpent, visible on some of the leaves, is pointed out as a miraculous trace of the event.

We need not dwell on the story of St. Benedict, or attempt to disentangle its legendary from its historic elements. Suffice it to say that when Romanus was sent by his Abbot on a mission in 498, the hiding-place of Benedict was intimated to a priest who visited him with food; and, as his retreat became known to the neighbouring peasantry, his fame spread, and the monks of Vicovaro (Horace's *Varia*), in spite of his earnest warnings and remonstrances, insisted on making him their Abbot. They were, however, soon wearied by his austerities and endeavoured to poison him. Leaving them in order to live once more alone in his cavern, he was sought out by so many disciples that he was led to found twelve monasteries, each inhabited by twelve monks. Here, too, he received two noble boys, aged twelve and seven—Maurus and Placidus—sent by their fathers, who were Roman senators, to be trained under his influence. His fame and sanctity awakened the fanatical hatred of a wicked priest in the neighbourhood named Fulgentius, who assailed him—first by the poison of calumny, and then by actual poison. Benedict was aware of his peril, and at his command a raven carried far from human habitation the poisoned loaf which Fulgentius had brought. In memory of this incident tame ravens have always been kept at the monastery, and two of the glossy, beautiful creatures came up to me for food when I went out of the Holy Cave. When Fulgentius tried not only to kill but also to corrupt his monks, St. Benedict left the cave and the mountain in which he had now lived for thirty-five years. He was guided by Divine Providence to the fine isolated hill of Monte Cassino, and there, on the boundaries of Samnium and Campania, in the midst of a population still addicted to the dying superstitions of Paganism, and amid the ruins of an ancient temple of Apollo, he built the glorious monastery of Monte Cassino—the arch-monastery of that great Benedictine order which has rendered so many services to literature and to civilisation. Here he lived for fourteen years longer, wisely intermingling prayer and labour, subduing

Savage hearts alike and barren moors.

Here, from a window of his cell, seeing the world beneath him all bathed in glorious sunshine, '*inspexit et desepxit*,' he gazed down upon the glories of earth and was untempted by them.

Here, in 542, he had the famous interview which made so deep an impression upon Totila, the Ostrogoth. Here he was joined by his twin-sister, Scolastica, who built a monastery for women. Here, forty days after he had seen the vision of his sister's soul received into heaven as a dove, he himself died, standing with extended arms, and murmuring a prayer to heaven; and at Monte Cassino, as at Subiaco, 'from his heart' (as Pope Urban II. said), 'as from a fountain of Paradise,' flowed all that was true and noble and sincere in the monasticism of the West.

But besides being a scene of unusual beauty, and besides being so closely connected with such historic and religious memories, Subiaco is well worthy of a visit. In our journey thither, we pass by Mandela and Varia, and the 'gelidus Digentia rivus,' which recall at every turn the verses of Horace, and which remind us we are not far from his Sabine farm. The town nestles amid abundant foliage, dominated by its lofty mediæval castle, and adorned with the stately monasteries of St. Francis on the bank of the river and Sta. Scolastica and the Sagro Speco on the mountain. And the Holy Cave was not only the cradle of Western monasticism; it is connected also with the beginnings of Gothic architecture in Italy; of Italian printing; and of Italian art.

As regards architecture, the second of the three monasteries of Sta. Scolastica dates from 1052, and, with the upper of the three churches built over the cave in 1075, furnishes the earliest specimens of the Pointed arch in Italy. Here, too, appeared the first book which was printed in Italy. The German printers, Schweinheim and Pannartz, established themselves here in 1468, and the first book which they printed was the grammar of Donatus, succeeded by editions of works of Lactantius, Cicero, and Augustine, of which copies are preserved in the library of the monastery. No less remarkable is the fact that among the many deeply interesting frescoes which cover every wall in the churches of Speco, there is a Madonna—hardly, if at all, inferior in beauty to the far-famed Madonna of Cimabue in the church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence—which was painted in 1219, and therefore fifty years before that of Cimabue. At the side of the Madonna's throne are two angels, and over that on the left hand is the inscription, 'Magister Conxolus pinxit.' Unfortunately nothing is known of this painter Conciolo, who had begun thus early to emancipate Italian art from the traditions of Byzantinism, and of whom no other specimens have been preserved except this and the frescoes near

it. He was perhaps a Greek, but must remain for us the shadow of a name. Neither Vasari, nor Lomazzo, nor Lanzi, nor Passavant, nor Rio, nor Kugler, nor Blanc, nor Mantz, so much as mention his name!

The Sagro Speco also contains the works of another unknown painter—Brother Odo. Among other frescoes of this monk, here alone preserved, is an intensely interesting portrait of St. Francis of Assisi, bearing in his hands a scroll with the words, ‘*Pax huic domui.*’ At his feet kneels the small figure of a monk, representing Brother Odo himself. Underneath are the words, ‘*Vera effigies S. Francisci Assisi a quodam Monacho depicta cum Sanctus hoc sacellum veneratione prosequeretur, MCCXXIII.*’ Here, then, we have another early thirteenth-century picture, precious as the only known contemporary likeness of the sweet and humble saint whose name floats like a perfume over that stormy epoch. He is painted before his canonisation, even before the days of the *stigmata*; and as we look at this rude fresco we see in the face a natural grace and sweetness which is wholly wanting to the unnatural and almost revolting pictures of his emaciation in the later and purely imaginary works of Spanish and Italian art.

Subiaco is also a place of deep interest from its general connexion with mediæval history, from the great ecclesiastics whom it bred, and from the struggle of the Orsini and Colonna families with which it was entangled, and of which a trace still remains in the tower built above the oratories of the Cave. It was erected by the Colonnas in order that they might watch from this commanding height the raids of the formidable rivals. The Cave also boasts of the number of its illustrious visitors, among whom were twenty saints, fourteen popes, one emperor (Otho III.), one empress (the celebrated Agnes), one king, two queens, and innumerable cardinals, bishops, and other learned and famous persons. Of the popes who came on pilgrimage to it, the most remarkable were Innocent III. in 1203, and Gregory IX. in 1227. The latter, as an inscription tells us, ‘*macerated his sacred limbs*’ there in ascetic humility for two months. Both are represented in contemporary frescoes. Innocent III. is a man with a strikingly powerful and handsome face; he wears but one crown on his tiara, and holds in his hand the bull which he issued in favour of the monks. Gregory IX., who had been an Abbot of Sta. Scolastica, holds in his hand an open book, in which was written, ‘*Vere locus iste sanctus est in quo stamus.*’

The churches of the Speco abound in points of interest, but I must here stop, for I remember Voltaire's

‘Mais malheur à l'auteur qui veut toujours instruire;  
Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire.’

I should like, however, to mention two things more. One is the burial-place of the monks, whose countless skulls and bleaching bones are visible through a grating in a ‘*pozzo profondissimo*’ at our feet. Over it is a fresco representing the triumph of Death, whose white horse—painted at full gallop as a symbol of the shortness of life—tramples corpses of every age and rank under his feet. On the scythe of Death, explaining the details of the allegory, are the words, ‘*Mors malis formidabilis; bonis desiderabilis; nemini evitabilis.*’ On the other wall is painted the well-known mediæval story of the three young knights, to whom an aged hermit explains the warning conveyed by the three corpses, on which they have suddenly come amid their gay hunting; a picture which will remind us of the more famous one by Orcagna in the Campo Santo of Pisa.

Lastly, in the garden of marvellous roses there is the fresco which represents St. Benedict's self-subdual and the lines—

‘*Quos tinxit sancto Benedictus sanguine vepres,  
Francisci gignunt insitione rosas.*’

Here, too, we find one of the indications that the saint made his hermitage in an oracular cavern of ancient idolatries. It is a small cippus of marble on a little rocky platform of several steps which once served as the pedestal of an image of Semo Sancus Sylvanus, the Sabine deity, whose statue on the island of the Tiber, Justin Martyr, by a curious blunder, identified with a supposed statue to Simon Magus. This cippus was found in the grove near the monastery of the Speco, and was erected (as we are informed by the ancient votive inscription) by a freedman, Attius Dionysius, when, in accordance with a vision, he had obtained his liberty.

The excursion from Rome to Subiaco is easy and delightful. I recommend it to all travellers. Of the spell exercised by the Holy Cave there is no stronger proof than the testimony of Renan, that even if a sceptic enters it he can hardly fail to leave it as a believer. We may heartily echo the benediction inscribed over the portal: ‘*Sit pax intranti, sit gratia digna precanti.*’

F. W. FARRAR.

## *A Visit to Jeddah and Suakin.*

THE sun's red disc was burying itself in the Egyptian Desert behind the minarets of Suez as on February 23rd of this year I embarked on the Austrian Lloyd steamship *Orion*, bound for the Red Sea ports and India. The western sky became all green and gold, flecked here and there with fire-tipped clouds, and the low sandhills of the Sinaitic peninsula were lit up with that peculiar glow which Mr. Holman Hunt alone of living painters has succeeded in transferring to canvas. The brief twilight of the South was soon followed by the shades of night, and a scramble took place among the Mecca pilgrims, who formed the majority of the third-class passengers, for the best sleeping-places on deck. In less than half an hour every hajji had curled himself up in his haik, and a chorus of snores told us that the miseries of the pilgrimage were being forgotten in slumber.

A stiff northerly breeze, by which a merciful Providence habitually tempers the sun's heat to the inhabitants of the Red Sea littoral, bore us merrily down the gulf. The peaks of Sinai receded from our view, and on the morning of the third day we could see the white houses of Jeddah, and the sandy plains which environ the port of Mecca. At the sight of the mountains encircling the Holy City, the Hajjis, or at least such of them as were good and devout Moslems, divested themselves of every particle of coloured clothing, and stood arrayed in pure white. According to the strict letter of the religious law, all sewn garments are cast aside, and the pilgrim enwraps himself in a sheet like a bath-towel. Several hours elapsed before we reached our anchorage. The roadstead is studded with hidden coral reefs, their presence being indicated by the surf breaking over them and the brilliant green of the water in their vicinity. As we glided slowly through the narrow tortuous channel we had leisure to admire the varied hues of the sea—patches of indigo, yellow, green, violet, and

peacock-blue intermingled, and forming a watery carpet of a most astonishing pattern.

A two miles' sail in a small boat brought us ashore, but not before we had shipped over half a foot of water and were within an ace of upsetting. The prospect of a swim among the sharks, who are popularly supposed to vastly prefer white meat to brown, was not an agreeable one, and I was therefore not sorry to find myself on *terra firma* for the first time on the shores of Arabia. The perfumes of that highly favoured land saluted our nostrils with their fullest force and fragrance as we landed and were promptly taken in tow by the sanitary inspector of the place. I fancied myself a tolerable connoisseur in Oriental smells, but I was forced to admit that I had still much to learn as they ushered us into a sort of iron cage which they said was the Health Office, where passengers landing had to be examined before they were allowed in the town. I thought their fears of our importing disease into their malodorous city a little overstrained, as I will warrant Jeddah to grow on its own soil every possible plague which a reasonable man can hope to catch. However, the ordeal has to be gone through, and it is as well to smile and try and look pleased until it is all over.

Leaving the highly-scented Health Office, we entered the city and found ourselves in the main street, which is covered in with canvas to keep out the sun's rays. In the bazaars on either side grave turbaned shopmen sat cross-legged lazily sucking at the everlasting hubble-bubble, but driving the while a pretty brisk trade. The place was alive with people, and the scene, to travellers fresh from the semi-Europeanised cities of Lower Egypt, most striking in its thorough Orientality. In Cairo the gorgeousness of the East is eclipsed by the magnificence and luxury of the West; and even the Pyramids, those once lone monuments of the incurable idiocy of Oriental despotism, now frown down upon a palatial hotel replete with every modern comfort. Jeddah, on the other hand, contains nothing to jar upon the artistic sense, and the crowd in its streets presents a variety of types and faces and costumes which is quite startling. Wild-looking Bedouins from the desert, astride of tall camels, pass shouting through the throng. Fat, over-fed merchants, richly clad, jostle with beggars in rags, and there is a perfect babel of discordant jargons. Hajjis from every quarter of the globe wander aimlessly about. Stalwart Afghans and half-naked Afridis, sinewy Hadendowas from the opposite coast, mingled with a miscellaneous mob of Turks, Egyptians, Javanese, travel-stained pilgrims from Tunis and Tri-

poli, Soudan negroes, and Magrebbins from the far-off shores of Barbary. The faces of the more fanatical are ablaze with religious fervour, and the frequent spitting and the muttered curses as we pass by are the outward expression of their inward sentiments towards the infidel.

Wandering down the side streets, we came across numerous quaint corners and doorways and arches which would afford a painter ample material. The houses, too, are exceedingly picturesque, with arabesque stucco mouldings and *mooshrabeea* lattice-work covering all the windows. The richness and abundance of this *mooshrabeea* wood-carving is the most striking feature in the town, and there is certainly nothing in Cairo to compare with it. Passing down a narrow wynd, we encounter a party of Jeddah ladies, their faces veiled with black and white *yashmaks*—‘nose-bags’ one of our party profanely styles them—their very short skirts displaying legs encased in tightly-fitting striped linen trousers, and yellow top-boots on their feet. Behind them an Arab walks, carrying a newly-born baby with its face tattooed all over like a midshipman’s forearm. Everybody and everything, by the way, in this funny city is painted and decorated. The men dye their beards a carrot red, their finger-nails are stained with *khenna*, and under their eyes they paste as much lampblack as they conveniently can. The animals, too, are just as gorgeous. Those ridiculous lap-eared, hook-nosed goats are tricked out in all sorts of fantastic colours; the hens are stained blue and vermilion; and here comes a grey donkey, rendered an ‘arrangement’ in mauve and orange, with his legs tattooed and a frill over his fetlocks.

Like good pilgrims, as in duty bound, we visited Eve’s tomb in the desert, a short distance outside the walls. Our first mother must have been a lady of fine proportions, as the grave is fully a hundred and fifty yards long, and they assured us that only part of her was buried here, the feet being somewhere in Ceylon. Over the body, near the centre of the tomb, is a small *kubbah*, or alcoved chapel, inscribed all over with texts from the Koran, which, contrary to my expectation, we were permitted to enter and inspect.

Fifty-two miles eastwards of Jeddah, and twelve miles beyond Mecca, rises the Jebel Arafat, or Mount of Acquaintance, where, as Arabian legend tells us, Adam first made the acquaintance of his bride. It may be presumed, though history does not record the fact, that, under the peculiar circumstances of their meeting,

formal introduction was dispensed with. Tradition is also silent as to the reasons which induced them to wander so far from the bowers of Paradise to this bleak and inhospitable region.

Returning from the tomb, we met a large party of Indian hajjis, fresh from Quarantine Island, hurrying with eager footsteps to pay their respects to the shrine of the mother of the human race. They were being personally conducted by an individual who seemed to perform the functions of an Oriental Cook or Gaze, and no doubt he fleeced them handsomely for his services. How I pity these poor hajjis! As though the miseries of the voyage on the crowded pilgrim ships were not enough, they are bullied and squeezed by the Turkish officials and the townspeople of Jeddah, and on the road to Mecca pillaged, possibly murdered, by marauding Bedouins. Yet they endure these and other evils with a meekness and fortitude beyond all praise, in the sure hope and belief that their sufferings will appear to their credit in the next world, on the Great Day when the balance shall be struck and every man's account made even by the Judge of all mankind.

We stayed three days in Jeddah while the steamer was unloading and taking in cargo. The beauty and quaintness of the streets made walking about a pleasure in spite of the odours and the daily increasing heat. I was anxious to see the slave market, but could never manage it, as they are careful to exclude all Europeans from the auctions. The traffic, though nominally suppressed, still flourishes *sub rosa*, and at times a brisk trade is carried on. Every sheikh almost is a passive or active slaver, and is ready to do a little business in human flesh if it is made worth his while and the risk is not too great. Among women, Abyssinian girls fetch most, the price varying from 10*l.* to 30*l.* Strange to say, their cost is considerably enhanced if they have had the small-pox, as in the case of puppies which have passed through the distemper.

On the evening of the third day we weighed anchor, and the following morning saw us coasting close along the African shore inside a line of coral reefs which run parallel with the coast for more than fifty miles. Suakin, a sort of miniature Oriental Venice, lay on our starboard bow, and soon we were slowly steaming up the long narrow lagoon which serves as its harbour. The coral banks shelve rapidly into deep water, so that large ships can anchor close under the walls of the town. Soon the steamer was surrounded by a flotilla of dug-out canoes propelled by copper-

coloured natives with single-bladed paddles, and we were rowed ashore more safely and expeditiously than at Jeddah. In contrast to the latter place, the town of Suakin is neither beautiful nor interesting, though the environs are decidedly more attractive. The principal part of the town, where the Europeans reside, lies on an island enfolded by the arms of the above-mentioned lagoon, and connected with the mainland by a causeway constructed by General Gordon, and called after his name. The Geff, or native quarter, consisting of a few streets of bazaars and numerous Arab tents and huts, covers a considerable extent of ground on the mainland. The entire population numbers about 3,000. The town is protected by a girdle of nine forts, about a mile outside the walls. Of these the two largest, called the Water Forts, guard the wells which, before the condensing engines were erected, used to supply the inhabitants with water of a more or less deadly quality. The ground strewn in their vicinity with fragments of shot and shell tells of the battles and sieges in which the last few years at Suakin have been so fruitful. Beyond the forts the ground stretches away in a level plain covered with thick scrub and bush to the foot of a picturesque chain of mountains, ranging from 2,000 to 4,000 feet in height, which run parallel with the coast.

In the afternoon we walked to the market-place, outside the principal gate, to see the distribution of bread to the starving natives who, to the number of some two or three thousand, were congregated outside the walls. The accounts of the famine resulting from three years' drought in the Soudan, published from time to time in the English newspapers, were in no wise exaggerated. Eleven people died the day we arrived. Gruesome tales were in circulation of dead bodies being dug up for food, cats and dogs being devoured, and even of the murder of infants by their famished relatives. The large majority of those I saw were women and little children, whose husbands and fathers no doubt had been killed in the wars with British troops, or else in the intertribal feuds which for the past seven years have played havoc with the native population. It was pitiable to see them—many mere skeletons in rags, their legs and arms hardly thicker than walking-sticks, and that horrible glare in their eyes which those who have once seen starving people can never forget. They were lying about in all directions, too weak in some cases even to stand, and barely able to crawl to the food. The men, too, were in hardly less deplorable condition, and it was hard to

realise that these poor cringing creatures were the once gallant tribesmen who broke the British square at Tamai, and with spear and shield faced our bullets and bayonets with a heroism almost without parallel. And then, as I thought of the thousands of Arabs massacred in the wicked, purposeless warfare we waged against them, pity for their miserable plight mingled with shame for the country whose cowardly, vacillating policy must share with too niggard Nature the responsibility for their present condition.

I used to take my turn at the bread-carts three or four days a week during my stay in Suakin. It was not pleasant standing for some hours in the broiling sun, serving out two loaves apiece to an unsavoury mob of famine-stricken wretches who begged and fought for a larger share; but it is curious how soon one becomes hardened to the most revolting sights, and to the performance of the most unpleasant duties. The distribution was excellently managed on the whole, but I fear it is a big task that the Relief Committee have set themselves, as the people can get no other food till September, when the next corn crop will be got in. Meanwhile the influx of paupers from the interior continues, and every day there are more mouths to feed.

The crowd in the milk-market hard by the spot where the relief was distributed gave me frequent opportunities of studying native types. The Hadendawas and Amarahs are splendid-looking fellows, with a wonderfully statuesque pose and bearing. Not many of them now wear the touzled wigs, richly dressed with *samman* (rancid butter), made familiar to us by the illustrated papers during the war. Their fanatical tyrant, Osman Digna, has issued an edict compelling them to have their heads shaved in accordance with Mohammedan law, so that only those who live under European protection dare retain the ancient fashion. Some wear their hair in knobs and patches about their heads, like French poodles. The women are not so handsome as the men, and the universal fashion of ringing their noses does not add to their beauty.

Ten days after our arrival there was a review of all the troops, and a march-out into the bush. The garrison of Suakin consists of three regiments, one Egyptian and two Soudanese, all officered by Englishmen. They struck us as being remarkably smart, the 11th Soudanese undoubtedly bearing the palm. This fine regiment contains many of Gordon's old soldiers, and it distinguished itself at Toski, and in other engagements with the Mahdists. It

is difficult to see, as long as the present policy of inaction continues, what is the necessity of so large a garrison; or rather, to go a step further, what is the use of our remaining at Suakin at all. As things are now, with nearly 3,000 trained soldiers eating their heads off within the city walls, a few hundred dervishes are permitted to terrorise the country and bully the people, who are sick to death of their rule, and to render the lives of Europeans unsafe a few miles outside the gates. The regulations give a thousand yards from the Water Forts as the limits of safety, but in some directions one can venture considerably farther without much risk. The nearest Mahdist outpost is at the Wells of Handoub, about eleven miles to the north-west. Here one Achmed Mahmoud, a renegade from the Egyptian service, has established himself with a small force of dervishes, and levies tolls on caravans passing to and from Berber, and fleeces the natives generally.

Being anxious to see something of the country, I arranged a sporting expedition northwards, which is on the whole the direction where one has least chance of meeting with hostile natives. The principal game in the neighbourhood of Suakin are gazelle and 'ariel,' an antelope of the gazelle tribe, but only a little smaller than a fallow deer. The usual way of stalking them is with a camel, the sportsman walking on foot behind his camel, and approaching the ariel in a gradually diminishing circle. Hence for two whole days I was compelled to endure the ungainly paces and bone-racking jolting of the 'ship of the desert,' who is to my mind, all things considered, the most intractable brute in creation. Our little caravan consisted of four camels, and their riders were Mohammed Erkab, a trusty hunter of the Amarah tribe, two Arab boys, who shared a camel between them, and a fuzzy-wigged Hadendowa, who enjoyed the reputation of being an accomplished camel-thief. The sun was already well above the Red Sea horizon as we sallied forth by the northern gate and took the track which follows the coast-line a few miles from the shore. Half an hour from the start my camel stumbled over a narrow line of rails, and lo! we were crossing all that remains of the abortive Suakin-Berber railway of which we once heard so much. 'Gladstone's Folly' some Suakin Tory has christened it. Hard by was a well, and as this was the only water we should come across for two days, we halted to replenish our water-skins and let the camels drink their fill. The only other wells in this direction are those of Handoub, which are in the

hands of the enemy. Leaving the well, we jolted on for over an hour, till I ached in every bone and joint, and began to wish my steed at the bottom of the Red Sea. By the way, I wonder the 'Liver Brigade,' who take equestrian exercise every morning in Hyde Park, do not transform themselves into a Camel Corps. The effect would be as striking as the cure would be certain and instantaneous. A welcome excuse for a halt was afforded by our arriving at a village consisting of seven tiny camel-hair tents, of which Mohammed, not without a touch of pride, assured me he was head sheikh. At the door of one of the tents a fond father was engaged in shaving his son's head with a fearful curved instrument like a bill-hook, while the mother occupied herself otherwise on the poll of another of her offspring. A dusky bare-footed lady, who wore an engaging smile, and a ring in her nose, was introduced to me as Mrs. Mohammed Erkab. She was surrounded by a quiverful of chubby-cheeked children, and entertained me handsomely with *dhurra* bread and a big mug of camel's milk.

Near the village we had met three of Achmed Mahmoud's dervishes—wild-looking fellows enough, covered with scars, and armed with entire Soudan panoply of sword and shield and two spears, one light for throwing, the other stouter and longer for hand-to-hand combat. I questioned Mohammed closely as to what they were doing. He said they were there to collect tolls for Achmed from the Arabs, and to keep him informed as to what was going on, particularly as to whether any foreigners passed up country. He added, however, that these men were friends of his, and would not tell of our having been seen. He also said by way of comforting me, that if even taken prisoner I should not be killed, but merely deported to Khartoum, there to turn Mussulman, and share captivity with Slatin Bey and the other political prisoners in the Mahdist capital; nor did he appear to regard this as a contingency which I need contemplate otherwise than with perfect equanimity.

From the village we struck inland in the direction of Handoub, and from this point we did not come across a single human habitation, and only an occasional Arab journeying to Suakin. We crossed the dry bed of the Khor Handoub, which runs down from the mountains at the back of the village. These *khors*, or water-courses, are dry during the greater part of the year, but in the rainy season become rushing torrents. In years to come, let us hope, when the country is opened up and freed from the bane of

Mahdist misrule, the Arabs will be taught the art of storing the water, and so protecting themselves against the famines to which they are now periodically subject. Beyond the *khôr* the vegetation grew sparser and sparser, until we found ourselves in a semi-desert region, where hardly any rain had fallen for three years. From the monotonous expanse of scrub-covered plain tall columns of sand whirled upwards in spiral eddies, till their tall shafts dissipated aloft, and blurred the azure of the sky with a yellowish haze. Animal life, however, was everywhere visible. Vultures of all sorts and sizes hovered persistently round us, as though anticipating the picking of our bones. Coveys of sand-grouse rose whistling under the camels' feet, while skywards the raucous notes of innumerable cranes, winging their way to the north, told of approaching summer heat. I had one or two long shots at ariel; but they were very wild, and I could make but indifferent practice with the Martini carbine I had borrowed of a friend in Suakin. As the sun grew hotter we saw some beautiful effects of mirage—large lakes with wooded islets seemingly reflected in the water—an altogether perfect illusion. Hunting is useless during the noonday heat, as the ariel go to sleep; so at one o'clock we sought the friendly shade of a solitary thorn-bush, and after a frugal and truly Arabian lunch of bread and dates and camel's milk we enjoyed an hour's nap.

Continuing our way northwards, we saw nothing but a few gazelle, so at a distance of about twenty miles from Suakin we turned towards the sea. Just as the sun was going down we came across a herd of ariel on a bank of sand, the evening glow lighting up their yellow hides and white rumps with a singularly pretty effect. I had a very easy shot, but missed, and returned disgusted to my Arabs, who were making ready for our open-air bivouac for the night under a bush. A fire was lit, and we supped off cold meat, bread, and cocoa. The camels were let loose to browse on anything they could find, though I think an ostrich would have turned up his nose at the fare which Nature provided them with. Luckily, camels aren't particular, so I made mine a handsome present of a couple of sardine tins and an empty soda-water bottle by way of *hors d'œuvre* for his supper. He seemed offended, however, and rejected them with a haughty curl of his long upper lip, though I will lay odds he didn't find anything else half as digestible. It's annoying in any case to be sneered at by a camel, especially when one means to be civil to him.

After supper, when the Arabs had repeated *al amghreb*, or

the evening prayer, with the accompanying prostrations, we prepared to turn in. We slept surrounded by a formidable armament of guns, rifles, swords, spears, daggers, and a revolver, which caused me much more anxiety than the *harāmi*, or thieves, whose attacks they were intended to repel. These *harāmi* are said to be very daring and adroit, and during times of distress it behoves travellers in the desert to keep good watch. Nothing, however, disturbed our slumbers, except an impudent jackal who tried to steal a hare I had shot the day before. There is something peculiarly weird about these bivouacs in the wilds: the gleam of the moonbeams on the surrounding waste, sharply cut by the dark shadows of the mountains; the solitude, and the silence broken only by the jackal's cry, and the screech of the night-hawk—all combine to make an impression upon one, which is heightened when you are in the midst of people who are notoriously animated by no friendly feelings towards the infidel foreigner.

We rose betimes next morning so as to come across the ariel while they were feeding. Towards noon we sighted a herd two or three miles from Handoub, and, dismounting from the camel, my hunter and I commenced the stalk. The hunter guided the camel with great skill, screening himself behind its fore-legs from the gaze of the antelope, whilst I followed as best I could behind, tumbling over stones and scratching my legs in the thorn-bushes in my endeavours to keep in the exact position behind the camel's hind legs prescribed by Mohammed. To the ariel we must have presented the appearance of one of those Drury Lane pantomime quadrupeds which have human beings for fore and hind legs; and a few years earlier they would have treated the strange-looking monster with the contempt it deserved, and allowed us to approach within easy range. Of late, however, the Arabs have taken to hunting them more frequently in this peculiar fashion, and bitter experience has made them much more wary. On the present occasion, when we had got within a hundred and fifty yards they made off at a sharp trot, and there was nothing for it but to let fly at once. By some happy chance the first shot bowled over the leader of the herd, which caused the others to stand still, uncertain which way to go, thus giving me time to fire twice. Three ariel bit the dust; but as I am almost positive that the second shot missed, two must have fallen at the last discharge. The Arabs, who had been getting somewhat disgusted with my bad shooting the day before, were wild with delight, and set to work with a will

to galloped our quarry. This operation took them nearly an hour, and I began to grow rather impatient. The stalk had taken us closer to Handoub than was perhaps altogether prudent, and I must confess to scanning the country in the direction of the rebel stronghold with some anxiety until we were well under way in the direction of Suakin, with the ariel slung over the camels' backs. None of Achmed Mahmoud's legionaries putting in an appearance, we arrived without mishap at the town soon after six o'clock.

In conclusion, let me say that Suakin, in springtime at least, is not half such a bad place as it is made out. In days to come, when the hill-country once more becomes accessible, and the Suakinee has his country house on the slopes of the Jebel Arko-weet, near Sinkat, even the summer will be tolerable. My experience of the place accords with those of the majority of European residents, and also of the soldiers quartered out there. As regards the latter, the cheerful energetic body of officers I found there, varying military routine with cricket, lawn-tennis, polo, and other sports, are very different from the gloomy picture which the imaginations of English people draw of them at home. To their kindness and hospitality, and to those of the officers and men of H.M.S. *Landrail*, I am indebted for many pleasant days and jovial evenings. Nor must the blameless Ethiopians who accompanied me on my expeditions be passed over without a word of acknowledgment for their services. And now, my time having drawn to its close, I embarked on board the Khedival post-boat *Zagazig*, en route for the North again. The leave-takings on the crowded deck of the steamer were as numerous as they were affecting, and soon we were once more tumbling about in the Red Sea waves, and Suakin faded from view, and the crests of the Soudan mountains sank behind the western horizon.

HUGH E. M. STUTFIELD.

## *A Song in the Night.*

SING, oh sing, for the night is dark, and the dawning tarries  
 long,  
 And the woe of the land of shadowing wings is stilled by the  
 sound of song.  
 There is never a light on the land to-night, there is never a star  
 in the sky,  
 Only the glance of the lightning's lance and the white waves  
 leaping high.

‘Where winter’s royal robe of snows  
 And knightly corselet gleam,  
 Lie hid the fragrance of the rose,  
 The music of the stream,

‘Waiting until the days shall bring,  
 From out the golden south,  
 The fairy Prince to find the Spring,  
 And kiss her on the mouth.

‘He comes, although he tarries long;  
 And then, my heart, ah then  
 The stream shall sing the hills among,  
 The rose shall bloom again.’

Sing, oh sing, for the words are sweet and the night is full of  
 fear,  
 The nameless terror that flies abroad in the darkness draws  
 anear;  
 The pale sea cries to the murky skies, and the sword of a song  
 alone  
 Can sever the spell that the powers of hell o’er the tortured earth  
 have thrown.

‘By her fairy lover kissed,  
 She from happy dreams shall waken,  
 When the shining silver mist  
 Winds of dawn to gold have shaken.

'When she wakes across the hills  
Swift shall dart the happy swallow,  
And the golden daffodils  
Dance in every misty hollow.

'When the glory of her eyes  
Meets his eyes that shine above her,  
Music clear and glad shall rise  
Sweet from lawn and leafy cover.

'Far through an enchanted land,  
Where the winds with song are laden,  
They shall wander, hand in hand,  
Happy youth and happy maiden.

'Westward, ever westward drawn,  
Birds and blossoms with them bringing,  
They shall follow with the dawn  
Till they hear the sea's wild singing.'

Soft sighs the breeze, and stars in the east grow pale,  
Shines far on the seas a boat with a silver sail,  
Silver buds on the trees and a silver song in the vale.

'Away, away, by creek and bay,  
Their fairy bark they steer,  
One long delight, by day and night,  
Through all the golden year.  
The sea-birds swing on tireless wing,  
The waves, with rhythmic beat,  
For evermore along the shore  
Their world-old song repeat.  
And borne on winds afar,  
The silver echoes fill  
The vault of heaven from star to star,  
The earth from hill to hill.'

Sing, oh sing, for the night is past, the sun shines over the sea,  
And the heart of the world is a song of love and hope for the  
days to be;  
The terror that flies through the midnight skies and the powers  
of the dark are gone;  
Till the music fills the echoing hills, heart of my heart sing on!

D. J. ROBERTSON.

## *The Accursed Bell.*

**FATHER!**

‘Well, chick! What is it?’

‘Where do the voices really come from, father—the voices you put in your bells?’

The questioner, eager, impatient, imperious, was a yellow-haired child of six; her blue eyes seemed to have caught their colour from the corn-flowers of her native harvest-fields, and the steppe-wind of Valdai had kissed her dimpled cheeks till they blushed rose-red.

That she was queen of the little realm in which she lived no one who saw her could doubt, and broad-chested Ivan Petrovitch, to whom her questions were addressed, was her father, and, *ex officio*, most humble of her slaves.

The room in which the two were at tea was unusually magnificent for Valdai, which is even now but a provincial townlet a day's journey from Moscow, and not touched by the line of railway yet; while, in the days of which I am writing, Nicholas the Tzar and his ruler were still in the womb of futurity, and the Petersburg-Moscow line unlaidd. Still, Valdai had and has its fame, not only as the centre of the fairest province of central Russia, but as the cradle of the bells. Every bell which rings across the snow from the Baltic to the Behring Sea still is, or claims to be, a native of Valdai. From the sledge's yuga and the cathedral-tower alike, the sweet bells of Valdai chime tunefully, ring solemnly, peal victoriously, or call to arms. Valdai is the home of the bells, and Ivan Petrovitch was the master bell-founder of Valdai; so, then, it was little wonder if the floor of his room was of polished parquetry, his samovar of brilliantly-burnished brass, and the rich carpets which adorned his walls perfect specimens of the highest art of Teheran and Tabriz. No wonder, either, that little Vera was interested in bells.

Ivan Petrovitch stroked his big brown beard, and looked re-

flectively at his long leathern boots. He was puzzled; this little fairy of his, with the wide-open, thoughtful eyes, had often puzzled him since he had come to know her well.

'The voices of the bells, Vera? Why, silly one, it is only the big clapper which strikes their sides, and then they ring out deep and full, or shrill and sweet, according to what the sides of the bell are made of.'

'No, no, father! Why *won't* you tell me? I know what you call the bell's tongue, but that is not what "speaks" to me. Nurse says that the fairies live in it, and tell it what to say. Nurse says that Vanka, when he used to drive over the snow near Moscow, saw the little wood-spirits come out of his sledge-bells, and dance beside the troika in the snowdrift, until they vanished away among the white birch-trees; but then she says Vanka may have been dreaming—and he *is* very sleepy-headed,' concluded Vera, thoughtfully.

'Well, Vera,' said her father, drawing the child towards him, 'perhaps nurse is nearly right. I often think the bells mean more than the men who ring them. But *I* don't put voices into them, child. You know the big Czar bell, in the great city? Well, I think the reason that it is so sad is that all the sighs of the weary town below flutter up and roost in it, and the poor tired prayers rest in it on their way to God, and the good bell helps them, and——'

'Father, do you think that my prayers for the little mother, who went away last spring, ever rest there?' asked Vera.

A mist came over Ivan's blue eyes, as he lifted the pretty questioner into his arms, and his voice, issuing from his great brown beard, had an odd, muffled sound in it.

'Yes, sweetheart, perhaps so,' he answered; 'but be sure she hears all you say to her. By-and-by we will have a bell of our own, Vera, sweeter than any that rings for my Lord Novgorod or the Tzar, to carry our messages to the little mother.'

'Is that what you are making at the foundry all day and all night, father? Is that what you want to put my silver cross into?' persisted the child.

'Yes, Vera, your cross, and anything you love best; and your father is putting into it all the skill he has gained in close on thirty years—all that the wealth won by a life of success can purchase, all that brain and heart can devise;' and, rising, Ivan put the child down, and paced up and down the long room, thinking and talking to himself.

'Yes, yes,' he muttered, 'your bell, Macha, may not have the

voice of angels, but it shall be strong as human passion, tender as human love, and pleading as man's remorse may make it.'

By-and-by he turned again to the child. 'Go now to nurse, Vera,' he said; 'father must go down to the foundry'—and, donning his fur cap and shouba, he left the room.

'Nauka,' said the child to her nurse a few minutes later, 'why does father always cry when I talk about the little mother, and why *won't* he tell me where she has gone to, and where the bells get their voices from?'

But the old nurse sat nibbling at her sunflower seeds, and made no answer. She was not good at guessing conundrums.

'How I put the voice into the bells, Vera?' muttered Ivan Petrovitch, as the crisp snow crunched under his feet on the way to the foundry. 'Yes, yes, that secret many have striven after; and, by heaven, there are older heads than yours would almost sell themselves to obtain it! That secret means wealth and fame, Vera, wealth and fame!'—and yet, as he said it, he sighed. And what was this plaintive southern Russian air, to which his steps unconsciously kept time as he approached the precincts of his factory?—

Ye rippling waves of golden corn! full ears,  
And reapers singing merry 'mid the grain,  
Be still! nor move these heavy eyes to tears;  
What once brought joy, now brings me only pain.

Whilst she still lived, sweet soul, now shrined in heav'n,  
Labour was sweet—alas! 'tis bitter now;  
Wealth worthless if to her it is not given—  
Then rest, ye reapers; labourers, leave the plough.

Ah me! there is no light upon the sheaves,  
The music of the summer breeze has fled;  
In summer's place are winter, and dead leaves—  
Why *should* I labour still, while love lies dead?

There was a sigh in every note of it, and a sob in every line. In spite of their sweetness, most of the Russian songs seem to well up from broken hearts, and as he hummed this one the determination and energy died out of Ivan's face, just as the last sunlight of the short winter day died out of the sky, leaving everything drear and desolate, the great black pine forests standing out

stark and cruel against the steely light of a gloaming which has neither softness nor shadows.

Unfortunately, Ivan's thoughts were in harmony with the landscape. Though not fifty yet, and though he was successful beyond many of his peers, Ivan felt that he had seen the last of his day's sunshine, and that the grey shadows of a wintry evening were already closing round his own life.

Six years ago he had been a cheery, imperious, good fellow. Success, and the brutal manners of his race and age, had made him hot-tempered, self-willed, and intolerant to his inferiors and subordinates; but even they had accounted him a kind master, rough, but ready to forgive—as ready with his roubles as he was with his whip: and the world thought that Macha, old Guriev's daughter, was a lucky lass indeed when she and Ivan were wed. For six years the town had held firmly to this opinion, seeing Ivan still her slave, loyal beyond the custom of his country. When Macha's sledge sent the snow-wreaths flying, her troika of horses was the finest in the province, her furs (constantly renewed) were beyond price, and the gold and jewels which she wore would have bought up any household in Valdai.

Alas! the world was wrong, as it generally is. The jewels were too heavy for little, fair-haired Macha, at the price she paid for them, and day by day the thin arms and hands grew less capable of bearing the weight.

Ivan had married beneath him, as they say. She was but the daughter of a peasant, unknown out of the village of Luteika where he was born, and having neither gold nor influence to give to help his daughter or her spouse.

Other men in Ivan's position would long ere now have worn half-a-dozen Orders, and stood high among the personages of his day for the work he had done; but Ivan had not got even the lowest of all Russian orders; and when the wine was in, and his temper out, he would quarrel with his poor child-wife over trifles, work himself into a fury beyond control, until his bitter tongue had told her that, had he been but wise enough to marry any but a peasant's daughter, his labour would not have been wasted and his merit unrewarded. And she believed him, and blamed herself. In her eyes he was a hero still, and instead of hating him for the dastardly cruelty of his bitter tongue, she loved him because he was not more cruel still, and daily reproached herself for the weakness which had led her to tie herself—her useless, worthless self—like a log, round the neck of the man whom she

loved, and who, in spite of her faults, was such a loyal, loving mate to her!

'Her faults! How the devils must have laughed,' Ivan thought, when *she* talked of *his* virtues and *her* faults!—her little untidinesses, her childish follies (she was hardly a grown woman when she died), and his furious gusts of passion, and that want of generosity which made him use words which hurt worse than a whip, to the girl he loved.

And so in time he killed his own sunshine. She never was strong enough or coarse enough for this everyday world of ours, and never knew that any of the trouble was Ivan's fault, or that Ivan was unkind, but just, without a murmur, faded out of his life, and when she met Death was almost glad that 'dear Ivan would have a better chance now.' And to-day he knew what he had done, and saw the trivial faults of the sweet little wife as they were, balanced them against the immeasurable purity and tenderness of her love for him, and, bowing his head between his hands, cried aloud to God and her for pardon for his sins. If it could have been, he would have given all his fame and all his wealth to call her back, if it were but to vex him again for one short hour. As it was, all his skill was lavished on this bell which he was founding, all his love upon the child which she had left.

A sudden hail roused him from his reverie to the world he lived in.

'Hi, Ivan Petrovitch! Ivan Petrovitch, hi!'

Ivan lifted his head, and looked across the quiet street to where, in the doorway of an open inn, the man stood who accosted him.

'Your health, Ivan Petrovitch, brother-in-law of mine! Are you too proud to drink a glass of vodka with a poor relation?'

The fellow was an ordinary-looking moujik, in long leathern boots and a sheepskin jacket, girt in at the waist by a gaudily-coloured sash; he was thoroughly Russian in his features and dress, and good-tempered drunkenness—for that Stepan was drunk, reeling drunk, there could be no doubt. In the low room opening on the street were a dozen more such as he, sitting at little tables, drinking neat spirits, and eating pickled cucumbers or smoking cigarettes.

'I would rather you cared for your own health than drank to mine, Stepan,' replied Ivan, coldly, trying to pass on.

'See, brothers,' retorted the drunkard, 'how my rich relation cares for my health; and yet he let our little Macha, blue-eyed little Macha, die!'

If a whip had caught Ivan across the face, it would not have

brought the blood to the surface with such a rush as did Stepan's drunken words. As the bell-founder laid his hand on his brother-in-law's collar, the crowd slunk back, fearful lest they should suffer from the furious passion which shook the strong man's frame.

'Stepan, you hog!' he hissed; 'if you must wallow in the mire, have your will. If you won't work, die in your own way and your own time; but if I hear you trail *her* name across your tavern-floor again, by Heaven, I'll kill you!' For a moment he gripped his enemy, and looked him in the eyes, and then, letting go his hold, turned, and strode away, with a white, weary look in the face, whence all the angry blood had ebbed again.

As his brother-in-law let him go, the drunken Stepan almost fell, but, recovering himself, sat down in a heap at one of the tables, and called for more vodka.

The departure of the angry Crœsus restored the courage of the other loafers, and Stepan was soon the centre of a sympathising crowd.

'He is a hard man, your brother-in-law,' said one, 'and loves neither God nor good liquor. For my part, I never trust a man who cannot take his glass with the rest.'

'Take his glass with the rest!' retorted another; 'Ivan Petrovitch takes his vodka as kindly as Stepan, but not in public. What do they say, mates, about "an angel abroad and a devil at home"?''

'Kill me, will he?' muttered Stepan. 'Ay, ay, kill me, as you did my little sister. No, no, batioushka (little father), "a horse has *four* legs, but even he stumbles sometimes," and you—well, no matter,' and, still muttering, Stepan paid his shot and staggered out across the snow. In the distance, at the end of the long, straggling street which constituted the village of Valdai, a group of buildings could be seen surrounded by a fierce red halo, which lit the snow for acres all round; and down the line of light which led to them, Stepan could see a strong figure striding on. There was no stagger in that stride—it was the walk of the strong, successful man, and Stepan cursed his brother-in-law for his wealth, and for his virtues, and for those furnaces which, 'so *he* said,' brought him both. In another second the strong man's figure had passed into the foundry, and the drunkard, staggering along the snowy street, was the only living thing in sight to disturb the great stillness of the winter night.

For hundreds of miles the steppes rolled away upon either side, sheeted with snow, and lit by the pale, steady moonlight. The

lake stretched its arms of ice round the island, its monastery and its pine woods, and only time seemed to move and God to watch.

The church of Valdai was full of worshippers, and the atmosphere in it heavy with incense, the thin wreaths of scented smoke curling up from the silver censers which the gorgeous priests swung before the altar. Now and again the deep voices of choir or congregation swelled up in some sonorous Amen, men's voices taking the place of the organ, which is unknown in Russian places of worship. Ivan Petrovitch and his little Vera were among the crowd of 'true believers,' and none bent the knee more reverently or sung the solemn antiphons more earnestly than Ivan. Music was a passion with him, and in the magnificence of the church interior and the storm of glorious sound his soul seemed lifted up, and he *felt* religion, instead of acting it only.

By-and-by a figure edged its way through the crowd, and touched Ivan on the shoulder, to call his attention to a lighted taper, which he was required to pass through the throng to its place before the shrine of St. Sergius.

All through the service these little offerings kept passing from hand to hand, and Ivan had done his share in forwarding his neighbours' gifts to their patron saints without taking any heed of those who demanded his aid; but the touch of this last man roused him. By some instinct, which we all possess, he recognised the touch of an enemy, and, turning, he came face to face with his brother-in-law. Unlike his fellows in the village, Stepan avoided the churches as much as he frequented the taverns, nor, unless drunk, did he ever force himself upon Ivan's notice. But for once he was in church and sober, and though surprised for a moment out of his self-control, Ivan Petrovitch did his bidding, and the candle was duly passed from hand to hand until it reached its place before the great glittering picture of the Saint. For the rest of that service Ivan's thoughts wandered sadly, and in spite of himself recurred again and again to his brother-in-law. In a Russian church there are no high-backed pews to doze in—there are, in fact, no pews at all. If you do not kneel, you must stand; and Ivan, standing, with his eyes and thoughts wandering from the present to the past, suddenly caught a glimpse of a figure which riveted his attention. By one of the church pillars lay rather than kneeled a peasant woman, her head bowed upon the pavement, and her whole figure shaken by the vehemence of her sobs and prayers. Something in the pose of the head, in the turn

of the shapely shoulders, touched the bell-founder, and reminded him of the wife he had lost, and his whole heart softened, even to Stepan.

As the deep-voiced choir chanted out 'the Lord have mercy upon us,' he gave in, and, turning, left the church. Outside he paced up and down for awhile until the others came out. Amongst them was Stepan, and, unlike his wont, he hesitated as he passed Ivan. This was the latter's chance.

'God be with you, Stepan!' he said, advancing, and holding out his hand. 'How fares it with you?'

'Poorly brother, poorly,' replied the other; 'the children have not even a crust of black bread.'

'But surely the good earth gave you a plentiful harvest, brother-in-law?'

'Ay, ay, the soil gave, but the dram-shop took it away; the Jew has the roubles, and the children starve,' growled Stepan.

'But why?' Ivan began.

'But why go to the dram-shop?' broke in the drunkard, savagely. 'As well ask the madman why he is mad, the poor man why he is poor. Why? because I can't help it, and I want to forget. You never want to forget, I suppose,' sneered Stepan.

The rich man winced; but the voices of the singers were still in his ears, and, though his brows contracted, he cleared away the frown with a mighty effort, and replied, gently: 'Well, it is a sad life without a good home, no doubt; but, Stepan, if you had a chance, would you work?'

'Work!' replied the latter; 'who would not rather work than starve? But who would give work to such as I am? "God loves labour," they say. Perhaps He does, but man will not give even that to a drunkard.'

'Wrong, brother; He will, and through me He offers it to you to-day. If you will come, there are good wages and regular work in my foundry for you from to-morrow. One of my men, Vassily (you knew him), died last week, and you may have his place. Will you take it?'

'God reward you, little father!' cried Stepan, catching his brother-in-law's hand in his, and raising it to his lips. 'You have saved my life. St. Sergius has not forgotten my candle.'

After a little more talk, the two separated, and went their own ways, the rich man warm with the sense of a virtuous action done against the grain, and the poor man—what of the poor man?

For awhile he stood looking after his patron with the old, servile

smile still upon his face. As a bend in the road hid Ivan from his view, the smile faded out, and he stood watching the groups of neighbours who passed him. They had all seen Ivan Petrovitch talking to the outcast of his wife's family, had even caught a few scraps of his loud-voiced conversation, and were singing that good man's praises and the beauty of forgiveness. And all this Stepan guessed, and his eyes began to glitter with an evil light. By-and-by he burst out into a low, savage laugh, which shaped itself at last into words. 'So,' he said, 'my trap caught him, caught my Pharisee, and Stepan, poor drunken Stepan, is to have work at the foundry, and live on the crumbs from the rich man's table. You fool, Ivan Petrovitch! you fool!' he hissed, and shook his fist fiercely in the direction of Ivan's house; and then, turning, slouched off to the dram-shop of his principal creditor, Adolphe, the German Jew.

'Can he mean to play me false? Can he mean to?'

Over and over again Ivan Petrovitch muttered the words to himself, as he paced to and fro over his parquetered floor, stopping now and again to look out of the window towards the great chimneys of his factories, round which a red halo spread over the quiet snow-scene. Twice in the last ten days something had occurred down at the foundry which had almost made him repent of his clemency to Stepan. Little things had gone wrong about the bell, and though his new workman had each time managed to clear himself with glib excuses, an impression of distrust and unrest now held possession of the master's breast. It had taken so long to make the preparations, and he had spent such endless care and toil in all the preliminaries for the founding of this his greatest work, and yet such a very little thing at the last moment might mar it all! The great mass of molten iron, which he meant to mould into a monument to his wife's memory and God's glory, was slowly simmering, growing ready for the supreme moment when he would let it out—a stream of crimson, liquid metal—into the mould which was to shape it into the queen of all bells that ever rang. Guns which had belched forth death-knells on Russia's battle-fields, beggars' coins thrown into the cauldron with a prayer to poverty's patron saint, little Vera's silver cross, were all blended in that red mass, waiting the master's word to rush forth and shape itself into a tongue which should herald man's joy and man's sorrow to the listening skies through centuries yet to come.

The skill of a lifetime, the beggar's mite, man's love, and the peasant's unreasoning faith, had all lent their aid to Ivan's bell, and the thought that a drunkard's carelessness or a false friend's treachery might ruin all was preying on the bell-founder's mind.

And for the last vigil before the great event, Stepan, his brother-in-law, was in charge of the foundry.

If the melted iron should be allowed to escape before the right moment came, the bell might as well have been founded by any tinker in Valdai. There would be no music in the metal, no fame for the founder.

It was still early in the wintry night—for there is but little evening in a Russian winter—and the last act in the making of the bell was not to take place until near midnight; but Ivan could not rest away from his treasure any longer. He was absurdly excited and nervous, he told himself, but he could not resist his impulses, so, donning his great fur coat and cap, he turned to the little daughter, and said: 'Good night, Vera; I'm going down to the foundry. We shall finish mother's bell to-night, and we'll have a long game to-morrow, my child.'

Vera stopped playing, and turned her innocent face to him for a kiss. 'What, going so soon, father? Mayn't I come and see you make the bell? It's not bedtime yet.'

'No, no, little one; you shall see the bell when it is made, and hear it when it swings high up in Moscow,' replied her father.

'Ah! you don't want Vera to know how you put the voice in it. But Vera *will* know some day, father,' replied the child, with a pretty pout.

Ivan laughed, and went out, and for a time Vera stood at the window, lost in a child's reverie, staring wistfully at the red glow, towards which her father's tall form strode across the steppe.

For a moment the founder stood, his hand upon the latch, looking back towards the home he had left. Heaven only knows what his thoughts were then, or whether any half-articulate voice within warned him of the Rubicon he was crossing. In another moment he swung the door open, a flood of light rushed out, and then the door closed, and all was dark again. A few minutes later the stars may have seen a childish form, wrapped in soft furs, push the door open, and glide in like a shadow—or, perhaps, it *was* only a shadow, and the watching stars were wrong. Be that as it may, the hours crept silently on, and towards midnight the foundry-bell rang, and the workers came in to assist at the last act in the founding of Ivan's bell. But the work was done, and

their help was not needed. The cock of the great vat that held the metal had been turned, and the iron had run down into the mould, and covered the great shell which had been fashioned for its reception. Ivan Petrovitch, strangely quiet and still for one of his fiery temper, scarcely cursed them for a set of drunken dolts in not being on the spot in time, and seemed utterly careless as to the bell itself. A few instructions and orders he gave as a matter of routine, and then turned to go, leaving the men open-mouthed with wonder, without offering any explanation of what had happened. Just as he was leaving, a thought appeared to strike him.

‘Say, Peter Gregorevitch,’ he said to his foreman, ‘where is that drunken beast, Stepan? He should have been here to watch to-night.’

‘He came at six, little father,’ the man replied. ‘Some of the men saw him, and he was not very drunk.’

Some of the others assented, and Ivan, looking from one to the other, muttered: ‘No matter, the bell is ruined. Someone has let the metal off before its time. I suppose that hog has done it, and is hiding now that he has done the mischief’; and then, with compressed lips and a white, drawn face, the master left the works.

If any one had watched him as he made his way home, they would hardly have guessed that the figure plodding wearily across the snow, with bent head and heavy feet, was the same strong, masterful man who had swung open the foundry-door some four hours earlier that night. As he entered his room, for once he passed the little lamp which swung before his holy picture without crossing himself and without a prayer. Though he lingered for a moment at his child’s door, he did not open it for one last good-night glance at the sweet sleeping face within, but, turning away with a shudder, set himself to cleanse his clothes from the snow and mud with which they were soiled. And for one who had but passed from his house to the foundry, Ivan’s clothes were strangely bemired that night. For an hour or two he paced up and down his room, and then blew out the lights, and sat down. When the grey morning light came, Ivan Petrovitch was still sitting in the same place, his face greyer than the dawn, colder and more chill than the February snow. One would have said that the ruin of his bell had broken his heart.

The next morning there was a stir in Valдай. All the little

world had heard that the great work had miscarried, and it was widely whispered that there had been foul play, and that Stepan had been the traitor. Though there were not wanting some who rubbed their hands in secret over the thought that their too-successful neighbour had failed, most of the villagers expressed, openly at least, sincere sorrow for the master-founder. And then men began to ask where the culprit was. Had any one seen Stepan? One or two had seen him at the gin-shop the night before, and one man spoke to having seen him go from the inn to his work. On being closely questioned, he admitted that he and Stepan had been making a night of it, and that when they parted the missing man had found some difficulty in steering a straight course for the foundry. 'The skim-milk,' he said, 'had got into his boots.' Beyond that he could tell them nothing; and after a time the inquiry might have ceased for the day, but that at this point a lad joined the little crowd carrying a peasant's fur cap in his hand.

'See here, brothers,' he said, 'what St. Anthony helped me to find by the lake this morning. It is a good cap, is it not?'

One of the men took it, and looked at it carelessly. 'Some fool with more copecks than brains has thrown it away. It is a good cap still,' he said, turning it about.

'Let me look,' said the man who had spoken to his drinking-bout with Stepan the night before; and then, after a moment's inspection, he turned to the group, and said, in a frightened voice: 'It is Stepan's cap; he is drowned!'

For a moment there was silence in the group, and then an older man than the rest said: 'No, that can hardly be at the lake, for a waggon-load of corn could not break the ice there now. But come, boy, show us where you found it.'

By this time the crowd had grown, and the elder of the village, with most of the little local officials, were on the spot.

The lad took them straight enough to where he had found the sheepskin cap—a spot by the edge of the lake where the shores come up to some garden fences on the outskirts of the town; and in the snow his tracks were plainly visible. But there were no tracks of the man to whom the cap had belonged, for since midnight a heavy fall of snow had come down, and spread a fresh sheet over all the earth for new chronicles of men's goings and comings to be written upon.

As the men stood looking, and wondering what to do next, Ivan Petrovitch joined them, and the crowd made way for him, as of right. When the story of the finding of the cap had been told,

he showed but little interest in it, beyond asking if there were any blood-stains on it.

'Blood-stains! Ivan Petrovitch, no one in Valдай would have murdered Stepan. Thieves don't rob beggars,' said one fellow.

'True,' replied Ivan, 'but the wolves have been close in of late.'

This was a new idea to the company, and with the bell-founder's assistance they sought until dusk began to fall for some trace of the missing man—a torn coat or some scraps of clothing; they knew well that those starving vagabonds of the steppe would have left nothing else if the drunkard had indeed become their prey.

But they sought in vain; there was no sign save the cap by the lake's edge, and with the great pine forests all round, and no tracks to guide them, it soon became evident that further search was useless.

Stepan had gone drunk to his work, had turned the cock, and let the metal rush out before its time; drunkenness, and fear for the consequences of his act, had made him leave the foundry, and wander out into the night; the cold had sent the spirit to his head, and then the wolves had got him, or else he was lying frozen somewhere among those gloomy pine woods, where no one would find him until the spring thaw cleared away the winter snows. And, after all, what did it matter? He was a useless, drunken sot. He owed the dram-selling German some few copecks; so he regretted him, though he only expressed his regret in evil-sounding German curses. Stepan had spoiled the bell which should have been the pride of Valдай—that, after all, was the most important thing with regard to him.

Thus it was that Stepan passed out of the village records, and was forgotten. Only a grey shadow rested always on his brother-in-law's life, stilling the boisterous laugh and freezing the cheery smile; and only the pines whispered to themselves at night of another secret of the human things which dwelt amongst them. And perhaps the stars and the night winds had knowledge of a drunkard's mocking laugh, of a strong man's angry curse, and of a dull thud which appalled the shrinking shadows in the foundry one winter's night, and was followed by a great stillness which seemed to haunt it still.

Days lagged by, and, in spite of the founder's apathy, work went on almost as usual. The bell had been given to a great church in Mother Moscow, and was to be hung ready for the Easter festival. After it has been cast, the bell is left for many days to cool, and

one by one these days glided on, until the time came to break the outer shell, and show it to the world. The way in which these great bells are built is somewhat in this wise. First of all, a rough pyramid is made, about the size of the interior of the bell, of bricks, and wood-work, and such like. This, again, is covered with a thick plaster of some mixture of clay, on which the interior of the bell is moulded. Outside this is made another shell of similar material, and between the two is the space into which the molten metal has to run. When the bell has been cast, and the metal has grown solid and cold, the outer crust is broken and taken away, and the bell is revealed, the metal bearing on it the impress of the mould which has been destroyed. Though no man hoped, and, least of all, its maker, that Ivan's achievement could be aught but a failure, which would only bring discredit upon the town, all took some interest in this unveiling of the great work; and on the day fixed for the breaking of the mould there was a large crowd of Ivan's friends and of the idle public in and around the foundry. Little Vera felt all a child's sorrow at the breaking of the fine mould, itself a work of art, with its inscriptions and designs standing out in bold relief. This feeling, however, soon gave place to delight as, one after another, pieces of the hard-baked earth fell away, and the beautiful, bronze-like metal of the newborn bell was revealed to her wondering eyes.

At last it stood there, twelve feet in height, and quite a long way round for such a tiny child to compass. Not a match for the Tzar Kolokol, the king of bells, of course, for that is twenty-six feet high and sixty-seven feet in girth, and weighs, moreover, some two hundred tons; but a great bell for all that, big enough to hold and to give out as much music as bell-metal is capable of, and a worthy monument of a man's skill and a woman's love. And, after all, it was no failure. There was not a flaw in it, and when struck it rang true and pure in tone as harp or organ, with a deep, sad note, which brought tears to Vera's eyes, and made the master blench strangely, as if a voice had spoken to him from the dead. For a moment he seemed as if he would have fallen, and covered his eyes with his hands, whilst a great trembling shook his strong frame from head to foot. Then he uncovered his face, and spoke roughly to the men:—

'It is enough! Let the bell be!' he said, and the crowd, looking on, murmured that Ivan Petrovitch was growing mad—the work and the disappointment, and now this unlooked-for success, had turned the strong man's brain. While the crowd still whispered,

little Vera had crept nearer to her father, and laid her small hands on his, and the people standing round heard her thin, childish treble saying:—

‘Father, was that Stepan’s voice?—poor Stepan! he must be so tired now; no wonder he is sad.’

Ivan Petrovitch stood like a man of stone, the great beads of cold dew gathering on his brow.

‘Be still, child, with your follies!’ he whispered; and yet his voice, which grated harshly, and came with an effort, could be heard plainly in every corner of the foundry. ‘Be still, I say!’

‘But, father, mayn’t he come out now,’ urged Vera; ‘you are not going to keep Stepan in the bell always?’

‘Child, have done with this nonsense!’ cried her father; ‘who put such mad dreams into your head?’

‘They are not dreams,’ persisted the child, in blind ignorance of the man’s pain and of the deed which she was doing; ‘and Nauka told me nothing. You would not tell your little Veritchka how you put the voices into the great bells, so she found out for herself. The last night you went down to the foundry, she crept down, crept down so quietly behind you, and saw you when you put poor Uncle Stepan into the bell——’

‘What! My God, child, *what* are you saying?’ gasped Ivan.

‘Oh, father!’ sobbed the child, frightened at her father’s tone; ‘you aren’t angry with your little Vera; but poor Stepan looked so white when he was asleep, and the great red mouth, where the flames are, so fierce——’

But before her innocent tongue had told its tale the father she loved reeled as a great ship reels when the sudden squall strikes it—reeled twice, heavily, and then fell crashing to the ground, while the long-pent-up feeling of the crowd broke out in one great, inarticulate gasp of horror and surprise.

For a space of many moments no one moved, and then some white-faced woman led the frightened, weeping child away, and the men, half-pitying, half-loathing, lifted their former master, and carried him forth from the scene of his life’s success and of his life’s crime.

Of course, it might be only the idle play of a mere child’s fancy; but she spoke like one who utters the truth, the more so that she used the words in utter ignorance of their import. And then the man’s bearing—that terribly drawn, white face, those phantom-seeing eyes, and the last headlong fall—if they did not stamp the tale as true, what did they mean?

An ill-rumour spreads fast and grows apace. Before Ivan Petrovitch had come back from the blessed swoon which had blotted out for awhile all sin and sorrow from his mind, the men of his village had found a hundred trifles, insignificant in themselves, but, taken together, forming a chain of corroborative evidence strong enough to hang twenty men.

'If,' they said, 'Ivan was innocent, why this appearance of guilt? why that short and scanty search for his brother-in-law? why, too, that question about the blood upon the cap?' Ivan Petrovitch, they said, had come down early that night to the factory, and found the red metal rushing out before its time, and the watcher gone. Why had he not rung the great bell, and summoned assistance, or at least made inquiries for the missing man at once? And in the confusion which reigned after that day's strange events the foundry was overrun by scores of inquisitive visitors, who peered about and pryed into corners all the more interesting to them because they had hitherto been forbidden ground.

One of these, turning over a heap of rough odds and ends of metal, after a while drew out a small, long-handled hammer, such as founders use to tap and try the soundness of their metal.

For a few minutes he balanced it idly in his hand, poising it, and trying its weight. Suddenly his eyes became riveted on one part of it, and then, uttering a cry, he dropped it, as if the handle had burnt him. As the others drew near him, he raised it again, holding it now jealously, like one who has made a discovery, and will not be robbed of his reward.

'See, brothers!' he said, 'he had hidden it among those old irons. It is the very hammer that he killed him with; there is his blood, and his hair is clinging to it still.'

And, in very truth, the red rust on the hammer's head might be the rust of blood; while, beyond doubt, still clinging to the metal were a few strands of such fair hair as had once been matted over drunken Stepan's brow.

When the next day dawned there was no need of further search or inquiry. The strong man's will had failed on the day he sinned, and he had only kept silence so long because no man questioned him. When he woke from his swoon, he confessed all freely, and felt that a load was lifted from him when he knew that the whole world shared his miserable secret. It was a simple story. The old sin had prevailed again. Through his very good

deeds the devil had found means to trip him, and throw him in the moment of his success. Ivan had gone down to the foundry, his head full of high hope, and his heart with thoughts of her for whose memory he was working. Standing in the doorway of his foundry, he had glanced back towards home, and the regrets for the past had been less bitter, and the future more bright than for many a day in the past.

With the offering of the bell a new experience was to begin for him. Its voice should not only pray for his past, but call him to a better and purer life in the future. So thinking, he had swung wide the door, and his eyes had fallen on the hissing metal, on the tide of which his hopes seemed wrecked, and on the face of the drunken devil who had wrecked them. With a jeering laugh, Stepan had taunted him with his failure, with his trust in him, and with his dead wife's name. Before Ivan had time to think, the weapon seemed to come into his hand, there was one furious blow, and then at his feet there lay a limp, dead thing, which should be a log round his neck for ever, to drown him in the waters of eternity.

As he stood looking at his work in a stony stupor of horror, the door must have been pushed open, and the child come in. After a while, instinct stirred him to hide the traces of his work. Hardly knowing what he did, he had dragged his victim to the mouth of the furnace, and pushed him in. The fierce heat did the rest, and a little heap of white ashes was, before morning, all that remained of Stepan and his treachery.

The rest the world knew; and now he lay at his great house, waiting for those who should lead him away, and decide what the world would do with what was left to him of life. He made no attempt at escape, no effort at defence; and when the men came, Ivan Petrovitch turned his back on sweet Valdai, on its holy lake and solemn pine woods, on the home he loved, and the child through whose innocent lips he had been condemned, and followed his guards to Moscow. The year's winter was passing away—his was but beginning. The snows were leaving the forests and the steppes—they were gathering thickly on his head and beard.

Spring was at hand in Central Russia. The long snows and frosts of winter had gone, and the steppes were bare again—bare in all their monotonous ugliness. The flower-time, with its many coloured blossoms and waves of long, rippling, sweet-scented grass, had not come yet. The acacia-trees in the streets of Valdai

had not even so much as a little green bud upon them, and the birches were swaying, leafless and sad, in the wind. The sky was dark and hard; and over all a fierce wind swept perpetually, glad, in its own wild way, at the thousands of miles of unbroken wilderness over which it could rage unchecked. But the wind, like all God's creations, was doing a good work in its own fashion. Little by little the sodden stretches of moorland were drying, and the impassable ways were becoming passable once more. It was for this that thousands of the saddest hearts in all sad Muscovy were waiting—waiting until a road was open, over leagues upon leagues of the most dreary country on God's earth, to the most hideous lot in all man's category of misfortunes. When the north-east wind had done its work, the convicts were to begin their march of two thousand miles to Siberia. Amongst these, in a foul den of which his numbed senses took but little heed, was Ivan, the bell-founder, surrounded by scores of wretches sentenced, like himself, to lifelong exile in Kara; for crimes of murder instigated by the most paltry motives of greed or drunken anger. In all the crowd of convicts there was not, probably, more than one who had ever known a much brighter lot than that which he endured at this moment, and but few who felt that the life they were leaving was worth regret. Russia does not hang her criminals. That is to be merciful. That is but to pass them, through the gate of death, into the hands of a Judge who can divide the sorely tempted and the penitent from the brute beast who sins and suffers not. Instead, she sends them together to live out their sentences in a hell from which there is no escape, in which there is no hope but death—and death itself seems as slow in coming and as merciless as Russian justice.

There are wild legends of escape from Siberian exile, but the convicts hardly dream of it. Not that their guardians are so vigilant and alert—far from it. To slip from them in the darkness of night would be no difficult matter; but the country itself is the prison-house. On one side is the endless steppe-land, stretching away to the far frontiers of China; on the other, that night of pine forests which covers the earth until the bitter frost stops further growth of tree or herb: and he who should wander further must come out on the frozen marshes by the edge of the Arctic Sea, on the unfinished fringe, as it were, of the world. Even those who escape are fain to go back or starve.

Besides Ivan, another guest had been brought from Valdai to Moscow—the great bell Macha. The bell had been given to one

of the churches, and the State had no intention of relinquishing its property, however deeply it was dyed with sorrow and weighted with crime. The bell was a good bell, and worth many thousand roubles, and its notes were sweet as a skylark's and strong as the voice of the sea. What did Moscow reckon of its maker? Does the world care that the most beautiful of men's words are wrung from human hearts and brains by heart-break or poverty? On the contrary, this is in accord with all Nature. Even a harp's chords must be strained almost to breaking before they will make music.

And so the bell came in triumph to Moscow, was consecrated by priests in joyous vestments, with all the grand ceremonial of the Greek Church, and hung in St. Basil's tower, to be rung for the first time at the coming Easter.

And when Easter came at last—that period of the Church's joy and earth's first awakening to spring and sunlight and the long days of lazy love-making, all Moscow was full of worshippers. Every church was crowded with peasants from the streets and from the steppes, and for once even Russia's pleasure-loving nobles woke to the necessity of religion, so that rich uniforms and brilliant Orders gleamed amongst the sheepskins of the poor.

It was the vigil of Easter-day, and Moscow, the heart of Russia, lay waiting for the signal to rejoice. A darkly bright night hung over the whole town, and the stars shone down upon the Sparrow Hills, over which, ere long, the devoted legions of Napoleon should rush to a carnival of fire, death, and defeat.

A great silence reigned everywhere. The white houses seemed mute and lifeless, and the bells beneath the green cross-crowned domes of Moscow's hundred churches were dumb.

The churches were full, but the streets were deserted, save for one silent train of men, with chains upon their ankles, and on their backs that fatal square of yellow cloth which marks the convicted criminal in Russia. The train of convicts was drawn up in the street which runs by St. Basil's, waiting for midnight ere they started upon their tramp across half a world. From time to time one of the Cossack escort pricked along the line, switching his whip, or making his long lance glitter in the starlight. Now and again the chains of some unhappy wretch rang together, and startled the silence, or one of the long line of springless carts which were to follow the exiles, and carry such as were too lame or feeble to walk, moved in its place, and its rough wheels and woodwork groaned like a man in agony.

Many a time in the nights to come some Northern town would wake at those groaning wheels and ringing gyves, and the startled burgher mutter to his shivering wife: 'There go some of this year's twenty thousand colonists for the North.' For the convicts must only pass through the towns at night, lest a rescue might be attempted, or sympathy excited for their sufferings. Inside St. Basil's a different scene was being enacted. The day's prayers were over, and the dense crowd stood hushed, awed, and waiting. There was no light anywhere throughout the vast interior. Here and there you could catch a glimpse of some mighty pillar or a dim suggestion of the great arch overhead. You could, if you listened, hear your neighbour breathing, and almost the beating of your own heart. But that was all. Minute followed minute, and outside the hands crept slowly over the face of the great white clock. And then, at last, far away at the east end of the church, there was a dim gleam of the faintest light, dimmer even than the first pale herald of morning; and through all that great congregation a little gasping sigh fluttered, like the breeze that comes with the dawn, and with the light came the first faint whispers of a music unutterably soft, sweet, and low. So faint was the light, and so far the sound, that eyes and ears were strained to their utmost, as though men hardly dared to trust their senses. But though the light was faint, it grew swiftly stronger and stronger, and the sweet singing came closer and closer, as though legions of angels were wheeling down, on broad wings, from the far skies above. At last the shadows were vanquished, the whole cathedral was flooded with light—light which blinded, by contrast with the darkness which it had dissipated, which flashed back from golden pictures and gem-studded images, and seemed one with that great wave of music that took all hearts by storm, and made the whole place throb and rock with its grand acclaim—'Christos vos Christ!' and every voice re-echoed, 'Christos vos Christ!' (Christ has risen!) The great sacrifice had been made—Death, and darkness, and the silence of sorrow had been conquered; Christ and joy reigned for ever; and, regardless of rank and station, men and women embraced in the good old fashion, women sobbed for happiness, and the world surged out of the churches to begin another year of riotous living until Lent came round again. Inside the church of St. Basil was light and love and music. Outside, the distant stars shone coldly in dark, cloudless skies, and but for their light there was the blackness as well as the silence of the grave. The straight street stretched away to the steppe, and the steppe rolled on without a

break to the frozen ocean. Only now and then a convict's fetters clanged together, or the north-east wind sobbed and sighed in the dark places of the night.

As the hour of midnight struck, the Cossack in command of the convicts gave the word to march, his satellites galloped along the line, the gyves rang, and the nameless, numbered crowd moved mechanically north, the tumbrils creaked and groaned, and the bell of Valdai rang out its virgin peal. Far through the oceans of the air the great circles of sound seemed to spread, ever widening and widening until they broke at the foot of the Father's throne, and with them one wild human cry, 'My God, my God, have mercy!' For a single moment a tall form in the convict's dress turned back, its white face raised to heaven, the fettered hands upheld, and then, before the furious Cossack could urge his horse alongside, the miserable creature fell heavily to earth.

It is no good, rough soldier of the Czar, to shake those poor limbs, useless to call up your tumbril from the rear; you may leave him there where he fell—he will never see Siberia.

Mere man's work can make no atonement to God for man's sins, but He hears the cry of the broken-hearted, and 'judgment is mine, saith the Lord.'

Ivan's bell had taken its first prayer to the Father's throne.

C. PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY.

## *Oxford: the Upper River.*

OXFORD, like Central Africa, has a strange fascination over her sons. Like Central Africa, too, she offers a boundless field to observation and research. A many-sided man may live in Oxford half-a-dozen different lives, and keep them all distinct. The average man, however, is not many-sided, and, were he to be asked what was his most pleasant recollection of Oxford life, would reply, if he belonged to the later development, 'footer,' or 'socket,' or 'the togger' (names he would trace to obsolete derivations), or, if he were a wag, 'the proggins.' One can imagine the howl of contempt which would greet such an answer as 'the upper river,' the 'smug's' river. What is a smug? Men belonging to other colleges would possibly suggest 'a —— man.' But that of course is no definition.

The difference between the two rivers is broadly this: the lower river is a training course; it flows below and away from the town, and drains it of boating men from every quarter. Men go on the lower river for business purposes, and not to look about; and this is just as well, for a long way below beautiful Iffley there is little to be seen. Even spires and towers have disappeared, so high are the banks on either side. Nuneham is very pretty, no doubt, but with a prettiness of the tea-tray order—that is to say, nature here is prim and over-aided. Nuneham is always quite tidy, and in her company manners; she requires red parasols and bright dresses, and without them she is incomplete.

One natural feature of interest there is indeed at Nuneham. This is a pool sacred to the water-soldier. Not a Royal Marine, dear reader, but a plant—*Stratiotes aloides*—which you will not find growing everywhere. This plant resembles in general appearance the top of a pineapple. During the greater part of the year it lives under water, burying its roots in the mud. But

under a summer impulse it weighs its anchors one by one, and, rising to the surface, courts the sun. And now it sends out many suckers, which bear young plants at their extremities like the young plants of the strawberry. Each of these gives rise to a stalk, from the middle of its whorl of leaves, which in due time bears a fair white flower. The seed is ripened under water, for, their flowering over, the plants, now grown nature, descend to their muddy bed.

The upper river stops short of the town. Pure and clean it comes, from its rising at Thames Head away up in the Gloucester hills, past Tadpole Weir, and a dozen other points of interest, to New-Bridge, where the windrush has carved itself a sparkling mill pool as it comes in from Witney town. And so the river runs on to beautiful Bablock Hythe, where there is one of the few remaining ferry boats, built large enough to take over a team of horses, their waggon and its load of hay. At Pinkhill Weir, just below, is another, a broader and truly magnificent pool. Many a noble trout has been taken out of 'Pingle' Pool; and many a phantom minnow has been lost in its curling eddies, for there are treacherous logs and moss-covered boulders lying hidden there in places. When the floods are out in winter over the broad, flat meadows, the ducks come there in some numbers, and the old lock-keeper will tell you the story of how he once stalked five wild swans. And now past Eynsham the river runs: Eynsham, which can boast the most beautiful bridge, Shillingford's excepted, on all the upper Thames. Old Dick Treadwell (pronounced Treddle), the tollgate-keeper, is worth a visit in himself. He is an enthusiast on the fiddle, as his father was before him; he remembers how his father once took him into Oxford to hear the 'head fiddler that ever lived,' and how his father told him that this wonderful performer got as much as 'two pun a night!' Ah, you may wonder, but his father told him, so he knows it must be right. The old camp on the hilltop looks down upon the bridge, and round the shoulder of the hill lie the great woods that stretch away to Witham without a break. On the left the meadows widen back, and Cassington spire and Yarnton tower stand out sharp in the sunlight. Presently a turn of the stream brings distant Oxford into view. But Oxford is five miles further yet, and the river many a long reach to pass, and an island where the otters eat their dinner, a bed of flowering-rush where the swans nest, King's Weir, and Godstow Abbey, and more long reaches before it comes to Medley Lock and ends as the upper river.

This, then, is a bird's-eye view of the upper river. It is early yet; we will take a dingey at Bossom's and spend a day up stream. Before evening (Vincent's derision notwithstanding) you shall surely be convinced that the smugs have the best of it.

There, we are not going to pull against time. You may light your pipe and lie back in the stern of the boat, and I will paddle you up stream and talk to you about the upper river.

'How far shall we get?'

I cannot tell. It will depend entirely upon what there is to see and hear.

Close under the tow-path the stream is running swift and strong. But in only a narrow channel, for clean across to the other bank the river is one big shallow. Everywhere you may see the sunlight playing on the golden gravel. Myriads of tiny fish—fry, minnow and bleak ('bly' in the language of Thames-side)—are darting about in shoals. Nature creates them in their millions because they have so many enemies. They carry their life—these little fish—in their fins, so to speak. Life would be unendurable could they anticipate; but I think they are always taken unawares. Now a thing that they took for a mussel shell starts up, opens, and sinks again into the mud, and two or three of their number are missing—an eel had been lying with his evil head just clear of the mud. Now a rainbow-coloured thing, flashing like Excalibur, comes headlong in from another world, and a kingfisher has carried off a gudgeon. And then all of a sudden, with a rush and a dash, a great spiny perch comes charging along, scattering the shoal in all directions, and when it closes up again there is a further gap in its numbers. There are many other enemies, and one that comes from far. When the common terns are moving inland on their way to nest by inland waters, and when they are going back to sea, one or two will stay behind and fly sometimes for a couple of days together up and down this favourite reach. Very lovely they look, these white sea swallows, and just a little strange, like angels 'visiting the green earth;' they seem to bring a sound of far-off breakers, and it is hard at first to recollect that this is big Port Meadow, and we but half-a-mile from Medley Lock.

Have you ever seen tame geese fly? Not more than a few yards at a time, I suspect. Well, then, these Port Meadow geese form an exception. They can fly almost the whole length of the meadow without once touching ground. You may see them do it almost any evening. Use has kept their muscles trim. Darwin

has told us how the vultures flock to their prey from amazing heights, each taking his cue from the next in order. And just so, when the cottagers open their back garden gates to feed the geese in the evening, the news spreads as if by magic, each little party hurrying up to its supper; those nearer running with outstretched wings, those down in the meadow—not to be forestalled—rising clear of the ground and flying right away to the top. They seldom get up higher than four feet, partly because they have no time to waste upon trajectories, and partly because if their wings *should* give out they will not have far to fall.

Here the shallow suddenly deepens, and opposite these willows is the hole known as Black Jack. Ask a waterman about Black Jack, and he instantly becomes mysterious; he predicates that 'we shall never know all that there is down there,' and 'reckons there are some things down there it's a good thing as we can't see. Don't you, Bill?' And Bill confirms the suspicion. Tradition says that Black Jack is fathomless, and so it is—by sculls and boathooks.

The sandpipers are not here to-day, they are away nesting by the Gloucester streams; very soon they will be back with their young, and hunting for shrimps along low-water mark. As you approach they will circle out over the stream with plaintive piping, to settle a few yards further on—a manœuvre they repeat a dozen times. Their place is taken now by the yellow wagtail, whose tactics are much the same. As beautiful as a humming-bird is Ray's wagtail, and almost as quick upon the wing. They are the constant companions of the Port Meadow cattle, attracted by the swarms of insects that come where cattle feed.

Let us fasten the painter to this little bridge and explore for a few yards this tiny stream. We have not time to examine it minutely, but I want you just to notice these two plants. They are not rare, but are worth noticing because, like the water-soldier, they are local plants. Among the primulas is one genus which includes two species only. One is a North American, the other an English plant. Here it is—*Hottonia*, the water-violet, and is flowering very late this year. The other we shall not find so easily. There, you see that hairy-looking weed floating about in thick bunches. It is *Utricularia*, the bladderwort, in some respects one of the most interesting of all our British plants. Not because of its flowers, which are yellow and ordinary, but because of a curious habit. It is a carnivorous plant. The little bladders interspersed among the leaves are each provided with a trap-door.

Should any prying larva or inquisitive little fry look in at the door in passing, his fate is sealed. He is caught, and drawn into a chamber of death from which there is no escape. A plant if kept in an aquarium will soon catch in this way most of the small things about—for instance, tiny fish, the larvæ of gnats, and even *Daphnia*, in spite of his shell. *Drosera*, the sundew, drains the insects of their juices as soon as they are caught. The bladderwort, on the contrary, simply holds its prisoners captive till they die, and then, it is said, feeds on the products of decay.

Now we must get back to our boat.

Look at that gaunt grey sentinel watching us from over the meadow. There are always a few herons' nests in Witham Woods, and this bird has come from there. He is waiting for frogs, and perhaps for a water-rat. As soon as we are safe away he will turn to his task again: lowering his head, rounding his shoulders, and watching on, like a grim magician brooding some new spell. Here we have reached the first ford (as far as I know) on the Thames. A man can walk across here in summer without getting wet above his knees. The ford is white with beds of water-crowfoot—a common flower, but, like many common flowers, it has its own special interest. Nature has adapted it remarkably to the conditions of its life. It has two distinct forms of leaves. On the top of the water it bears stout, flat, ovate leaves, which serve the double purpose of buoying it up and of presenting a wide surface to the action of the air and sun; but those which are swaying in the current underneath are modified to simple bunches of hair-like filaments. Over these the current has little power, since they yield to every impulse of the stream.

And here at last is Godstow Abbey, beautiful even now in its decay. Not so very long ago, when the navvies were making the new cut to let the floods off, they dug up some stone coffins and many mouldering bones; and before authority had time to intervene, these bones were hawked about for sale by the loafers of the bridge. Were some of those Fair Rosamond's? I cannot tell; but the old chroniclers have it that she was laid to rest at first within the chapel walls, till, in obedience to Hugh of Lincoln's stern command, the remains were removed elsewhere—perhaps just outside the walls. But, wherever the place, we may be sure the good nuns laid her lovingly, for until that fatal day when her peace of mind was broken by the glitter of a court, she had been ever welcome within the abbey walls, where all were the brighter for her fairness and her wit.

And now I will show you something that seems more vividly even than the grey walls themselves to put us in touch with that old time. These good nuns were no cloistered mystics—they were the ministers to the poor for miles around. And do you see this curious plant growing under the wall, with the heart-shaped leaf and the yellow trumpet flower? It is not a native of England, but was planted here by the nuns. Why? Because it is *Aristolochia*, the birthwort, and was useful as a medicine in certain cases, as its name implies.

Dear, what a little way we have come! and there is ever so much more to see and hear. It is getting so late that all we can do now is to leave the boat and hurriedly walk to King's Weir. You will seldom see finer silver poplars than those that grow in Godstow Wood. Do you notice how the trees are riddled by the goat-moth caterpillar? This is a favourite wood, too, for lime and poplar hawks and other *Sphingidæ*. Had we time I could show you a nightingale's nest. There are always one or two in this wood, and the sedge-warblers nest here in numbers. The reed-warbler also makes its lovely pendent nest in the reeds that flank the edge. In the matted roots of that fallen poplar which we can just see from here a pair of kingfishers have nested for many years. The boys cannot reach the nest because of the deep pool of water which the torn-up roots have left. And now I will tell you a secret. The hobbies breed here every year. Fortunately for themselves they do not come to this country until the leaf is on the trees. Sometimes they nest in an old kestrel's nest, and sometimes in that of a crow. They have a pretty habit of toying about just over the tops of the trees like large moths. Even an inexperienced hand may know them by their white throats. They live almost entirely on insect life, but the stupid, blundering keepers will not credit this.

All those holes in the bank are made by the crayfish. They are not fish at all, of course, but still we call them so. The Thames-side loafers catch them in a flat muslin net baited with bits of meat. The crayfish is a very interesting creature, and teaches us so much about hearts and brains, that Russians and Germans and a learned English professor have written whole books about nothing else than this.

We must particularly notice this still backwater, not only because of the beautiful lily-like *Limnanthemum* (it has, I think, no English name) and *Ranunculus Lingua*, the noble water-spearwort, but because it is the home of one of the most fascinating

creatures in all the range of animal life—namely, *Argyronetron*, the water-spider—the first who made the diving-bell. Watch it at its work. First of all it makes the bell: weaving it round and round, closer and closer, till the web is air-tight all throughout; then it lashes it firmly to the neighbouring plants, and so begins to fill it. Now comes the most wonderful part. Swimming to the surface of the water, it turns tail upwards, and with its two hindermost legs takes literally a piece of air, which it carries as a bubble down below. Conveying the bubble to the mouth of the bell, it lets it go. The bubble floats up inside the bell, and the first movement is complete. It only remains to repeat this performance, until gradually the bell is full of air, and hangs there as large as a silver thimble, and as bright as a ball of mercury.

And here is King's Weir, and there is a large trout on the rise. You may put any common brown trout into the Thames, and soon they shall be as big as this one. The Thames men say it is from feeding on the bly.

There, now, we must be getting back to Medley Lock. Medley itself belonged to the abbey; it was given to the nuns by Robert of Witham. The old writers say it was the 'middle-way'—that is, between Godstow and Oxford; and that it was a place of great resort for 'divers pleasures.'

Now you have seen a little of the upper river by day, but you must not think you know it yet. When you have seen it, as I have often seen it, in the dawn; when you have felt your way at night, as I have, round every winding reach, and listened to and learnt the meaning of some of the strange night-voices—then, and not till then, may you fairly claim to know a little of the upper river. Yes, you may read my verses, but you must see it for yourself. Here are the verses. It is early morning. Listen.

KING'S WEIR.

The house is silent; on the stair  
My foot falls strangely, and there creeps  
A chill about the morning air  
That speeds me where the hamlet sleeps.

I leave the sounding street and view  
The crescent paling to her death,  
And the broad meadows white with dew,  
And heavy with the orchis' breath.

*OXFORD: THE UPPER RIVER.*

Where bees protest a drowsy tale,  
 And plaintive peewits fall and twist,  
 And in the mowing-grass the rail—  
 A strident-voiced ventriloquist—

Creeps silently (its nest is near),  
 And the small bat eccentric flits—  
 Taking the moth—and on the Weir  
 A single yellow-wagtail sits.

And, wakened by the wakening morn,  
 The herald breeze begins to blow:  
 But now a doubtful murmur born  
 Of shivering hill-side beach, and now

It makes the silver poplars gleam,  
 And fans the thistles into play,  
 And whitens all the stiller stream,  
 And passing sighs itself away.

But it has left the water glad,  
 And made the big trout plunge and hurl  
 His length among the foam, and add  
 A breaking circle to the swirl.

. . . . .

Have we not seen a sick man lie  
 Prone on a weary fever bed,  
 With aimless hand and vacant eye  
 To tell the light of reason fled?

He breathes, but dead to all the ills  
 And joys of earth; and can we give  
 The name of life to breath that fills  
 A mindless frame? Is this to live?

But by-and-by the godlike light  
 Of purpose dawning in his face,  
 Plays widening round, till all is bright,  
 And life regains her perfect place.

. . . . .

The cold distinctness of the scene,  
 When stars are dead and lands are grey,  
 Seems such as this—the time between  
 The dawning and the perfect day.

But now the god, arising, shakes  
About the broadened canopy  
His locks red-gold, gold-red, and makes  
A glory in the eastern sky.

And welling in the fount of dawn  
Grows the great lambent tide, the same  
That lights the diamond on the lawn,  
Or rages till the prairies flame.

I see thee draw the wreathèd woof  
Of veiling mist across the plain ;  
I see thee glinting on the roof  
And burning on the burnished vane ;

Lighting the sedge-bird's secret place,  
Lifting the windflower's tired head,  
Blushing upon the briar's face,  
And laughing in the iris-bed.

And the great soul of earth, that moves  
In all I see or cannot see,  
Springs, radiant at the touch she loves,  
To lose itself in thee.

AUBYN BATTYE.

## *My Islands.*

**A**BOUT the middle of the Miocene period, as well as I can now remember (for I made no note of the precise date at the moment), my islands first appeared above the stormy sheet of the North-west Atlantic as a little rising group of mountain tops, capping a broad boss of submarine volcanoes. My attention was originally called to the new archipelago by a brother investigator of my own aerial race, who pointed out to me on the wing that at a spot some 900 miles to the west of the Portuguese coast, just opposite the place where your mushroom city of Lisbon now stands, the water of the ocean, as seen in a bird's-eye view from some three thousand feet above, formed a distinct greenish patch such as always betokens shoals or rising ground at the bottom. Flying out at once to the point he indicated, and poising myself above it on my broad pinions at a giddy altitude, I saw at a glance that my friend was quite right. Land-making was in progress. A volcanic upheaval was taking place on the bed of the sea. A new island group was being forced right up by lateral pressure or internal energies from a depth of at least two thousand fathoms.

I had always had a great liking for the study of material plants and animals, and I was so much interested in the occurrence of this novel phenomenon—the growth and development of an oceanic island before my very eyes—that I determined to devote the next few thousand centuries or so of my æonian existence to watching the course of its gradual evolution.

If I trusted to unaided memory, however, for my dates and facts, I might perhaps at this distance of time be uncertain whether the moment was really what I have roughly given, within a geological age or two, the period of the Mid-Miocene. But existing remains on one of the islands constituting my group (now called in your new-fangled terminology Santa Maria) help me to fix with comparative certainty the precise epoch of their original upheaval. For these remains, still in evidence on the

spot, consist of a few small marine deposits of Upper Miocene age; and I recollect distinctly that after the main group had been for some time raised above the surface of the ocean, and after sand and streams had formed a small sedimentary deposit containing Upper Miocene fossils beneath the shoal water surrounding the main group, a slight change of level occurred, during which this minor island was pushed up with the Miocene deposits on its shoulders, as a sort of natural memorandum to assist my random scientific recollections. With that solitary exception, however, the entire group remains essentially volcanic in its composition, exactly as it was when I first saw its youthful craters and its red-hot ash-cones pushed gradually up, century after century, from the deep blue waters of the Mid-Miocene ocean.

All round my islands the Atlantic then, as now, had a depth, as I said before, of two thousand fathoms; indeed, in some parts between the group and Portugal the plummet of your human navigators finds no bottom, I have often heard them say, till it reaches 2,500; and out of this profound sea-bed the volcanic energies pushed up my islands as a small submarine mountain range, whose topmost summits alone stood out bit by bit above the level of the surrounding sea. One of them, the most abrupt and cone-like, by name now Pico, rises to this day, a magnificent sight, sheer seven thousand feet into the sky from the placid sheet that girds it round on every side. You creatures of to-day, approaching it in one of your clumsy new-fashioned fire-driven canoes that you call steamers, must admire immensely its conical peak, as it stands out silhouetted against the glowing horizon in the deep red glare of a sub-tropical Atlantic sunset.

But when I, from my solitary aerial perch, saw my islands rise bare and massive first from the water's edge, the earliest idea that occurred to me as an investigator of nature was simply this: how will they ever get clad with soil and herbage and living creatures? So naked and barren were their black crags and rocks of volcanic slag, that I could hardly conceive how they could ever come to resemble the other smiling oceanic islands which I looked down upon in my flight from day to day over so many wide and scattered oceans. I set myself to watch, accordingly, whence they would derive the first seeds of life, and what changes would take place under dint of time upon their desolate surface.

For a long epoch, while the mountains were still rising in their active volcanic state, I saw but little evidence of a marked sort of the growth of living creatures upon their loose piles of

pumice. Gradually, however, I observed that spores of lichens, blown towards them by the wind, were beginning to sprout upon the more settled rocks, and to discolour the surface in places with grey and yellow patches. Bit by bit, as rain fell upon the new-born hills, it brought down from their weathered summits sand and mud, which the torrents ground small and deposited in little hollows in the valleys; and at last something like earth was found at certain spots, on which seeds, if there had been any, might doubtless have rooted and flourished exceedingly.

My primitive idea, as I watched my islands in this their almost lifeless condition, was that the Gulf Stream and the trade winds from America would bring the earliest higher plants and animals to our shores. But in this I soon found I was quite mistaken. The distance to be traversed was so great, and the current so slow, that the few seeds or germs of American species cast up upon the shore from time to time were mostly far too old and water-logged to show signs of life in such ungenial conditions. It was from the nearer coasts of Europe, on the contrary, that our earliest colonists seemed to come. Though the prevalent winds set from the west, more violent storms reached us occasionally from the eastward direction; and these, blowing from Europe, which lay so much closer to our group, were far more likely to bring with them by waves or wind some waifs and strays of the European fauna and flora.

I well remember the first of these great storms that produced any distinct impression on my islands. The plants that followed in its wake were a few small ferns, whose light spores were more readily carried on the breeze than any regular seeds of flowering plants. For a month or two nothing very marked occurred in the way of change, but slowly the spores rooted, and soon produced a small crop of ferns, which, finding the ground unoccupied, spread when once fairly started with extraordinary rapidity, till they covered all the suitable positions throughout the islands.

For the most part, however, additions to the flora, and still more to the fauna, were very gradually made; so much so that most of the species now found in the group did not arrive there till after the end of the Glacial epoch, and belong essentially to the modern European assemblage of plants and animals. This was partly because the islands themselves were surrounded by pack-ice during that chilly period, which interrupted for a time the course of my experiment. It was interesting, too, after the ice cleared away, to note what kinds could manage by stray accidents to

cross the ocean with a fair chance of sprouting or hatching out on the new soil, and which were totally unable by original constitution to survive the ordeal of immersion in the sea. For instance, I looked anxiously at first for the arrival of some casual acorn or some floating filbert, which might stock my islands with waving greenery of oaks and hazel bushes. But I gradually discovered, in the course of a few centuries, that these heavy nuts never floated securely so far as the outskirts of my little archipelago; and that consequently no chestnuts, apple trees, beeches, alders, larches, or pines ever came to diversify my island valleys. The seeds that did really reach us from time to time belonged rather to one or other of four special classes. Either they were very small and light, like the spores of ferns, fungi, and club-mosses; or they were winged and feathery, like dandelion and thistle-down; or they were the stones of fruits that are eaten by birds, like rose-hips and hawthorn; or they were chaffy grains, enclosed in papery scales, like grasses and sedges, of a kind well adapted to be readily borne on the surface of the water. In all these ways new plants did really get wafted by slow degrees to the islands; and if they were of kinds adapted to the climate they grew and flourished, living down the first growth of ferns and flowerless herbs in the rich valleys.

The time which it took to people my archipelago with these various plants was, of course, when judged by your human standards, immensely long, as often the group received only a single new addition in the lapse of two or three centuries. But I noticed one very curious result of this haphazard and lengthy mode of stocking the country: some of the plants which arrived the earliest, having the coast all clear to themselves, free from the fierce competition to which they had always been exposed on the mainland of Europe, began to sport a great deal in various directions, and being acted upon here by new conditions, soon assumed under stress of natural selection totally distinct specific forms. (You see, I have quite mastered your best modern scientific vocabulary.) For instance, there were at first no insects of any sort on the islands; and so those plants which in Europe depended for their fertilisation upon bees or butterflies had here either to adapt themselves somehow to the wind as a carrier of their pollen or else to die out for want of crossing. Again, the number of enemies being reduced to a minimum, these early plants tended to lose various defences or protections they had acquired on the mainland against slugs or ants, and so to become different in a corresponding degree from

their European ancestors. The consequence was that by the time you men first discovered the archipelago no fewer than forty kinds of plants had so far diverged from the parent forms in Europe or elsewhere that your savants considered them at once as distinct species, and set them down at first as indigenous creations. It amused me immensely.

For out of these forty plants thirty-four were to my certain knowledge of European origin. I had seen their seeds brought over by the wind or waves, and I had watched them gradually altering under stress of the new conditions into fresh varieties, which in process of time became distinct species. Two of the oldest were flowers of the dandelion and daisy group, provided with feathery seeds which enable them to fly far before the carrying breeze; and these two underwent such profound modifications in their insular home that the systematic botanists who at last examined them insisted upon putting each into a new genus, all by itself, invented for the special purpose of their reception. One almost equally ancient inhabitant, a sort of harebell, also became in process of time extremely unlike any other harebell I had ever seen in any part of my airy wanderings. But the remaining thirty new species or so, evolved in the islands by the special circumstances of the group, had varied so comparatively little from their primitive European ancestors that they hardly deserved to be called anything more than very distinct and divergent varieties.

Some five or six plants, however, I noted arrive in my archipelago, not from Europe, but from the Canaries or Madeira, whose distant blue peaks lay dim on the horizon far to the south-west of us, as I poised in mid-air high above the topmost pinnacle of my wild craggy Pico. These kinds, belonging to a much warmer region, soon, as I noticed, underwent considerable modification in our cooler climate, and were all of them adjudged distinct species by the learned gentlemen who finally reported upon my island realm to British science.

As far as I can recollect, then, the total number of flowering plants I noted in the islands before the arrival of man was about 200; and of these, as I said before, only forty had so far altered in type as to be considered at present peculiar to the archipelago. The remainder were either comparatively recent arrivals or else had found the conditions of their new home so like those of the old one from which they migrated, that comparatively little change took place in their forms or habits. Of course, just in proportion as the islands got stocked I noticed that the changes

were less and less marked; for each new plant, insect, or bird that established itself successfully tended to make the balance of nature more similar to the one that obtained in the mainland opposite, and so decreased the chances of novelty of variation. Hence, it struck me that the oldest arrivals were the ones which altered most in adaptation to the circumstances, while the newest, finding themselves in comparatively familiar surroundings, had less occasion to be selected for strange and curious freaks or sports of form or colour.

The peopling of the islands with birds and animals, however, was to me even a more interesting and engrossing study in natural evolution than its peopling by plants, shrubs, and trees. I may as well begin, therefore, by telling you at once that no furry or hairy quadruped of any sort—no mammal, as I understand your men of science call them—was ever stranded alive upon the shores of my islands. For twenty or thirty centuries, indeed, I waited patiently, examining every piece of driftwood cast up upon our beaches, in the faint hope that perhaps some tiny mouse or shrew or water-vole might lurk half-drowned in some cranny or crevice of the bark or trunk. But it was all in vain. I ought to have known beforehand that terrestrial animals of the higher types never by any chance reach an oceanic island in any part of this planet. The only three specimens of mammals I ever saw tossed up on the beach were two drowned mice and an unhappy squirrel, all as dead as doornails, and horribly mauled by the sea and the breakers. Nor did we ever get a snake, a lizard, a frog, or a fresh-water fish, whose eggs I at first fondly supposed might occasionally be transported to us on bits of floating trees or matted turf, torn by floods from those prehistoric Lusitanian or African forests. No such luck was ours. Not a single terrestrial vertebrate of any sort appeared upon our shores before the advent of man with his domestic animals, who played havoc at once with my interesting experiment.

It was quite otherwise with the unobtrusive small deer of life—the snails, and beetles, and flies, and earth-worms—and especially with the winged things: birds, bats, and butterflies. In the very earliest days of my islands' existence, indeed, a few stray feathered fowls of the air were driven ashore here by violent storms, at a time when vegetation had not yet begun to clothe the naked pumice and volcanic rock; but these, of course, perished for want of food, as did also a few later arrivals, who came under stress of weather at the period when only ferns, lichens, and mosses had as

yet obtained a foothold on the young archipelago. Sea-birds, of course, soon found out our rocks; but as they live off fish only, they contributed little more than rich beds of guano to the permanent colonising of the islands. As well as I can remember, the land-snails were the earliest truly terrestrial casuals that managed to pick up a stray livelihood in these first colonial days of the archipelago. They came oftenest in the egg, sometimes clinging to water-logged leaves cast up by storms, sometimes hidden in the bark of floating driftwood, and sometimes swimming free on the open ocean. In one case, as I recall to myself well, a swallow, driven off from the Portuguese coast, a little before the Glacial period had begun to whiten the distant mountains of central and northern Europe, fell exhausted at last upon the shore of Terceira. There were no insects then for the poor bird to feed upon, so it died of starvation and weariness before the day was out; but a little earth that clung in a pellet to one of its feet contained the egg of a land-shell, while the prickly seed of a common Spanish plant was entangled among the wing feathers by its hooked awns. The egg hatched out, and became the parent of a large brood of minute snails, which, outliving the cold spell of the Ice Age, had developed into a very distinct type in the long period that intervened before the advent of man in the islands; while the seed sprang up on the natural manure heap afforded by the swallow's decaying body, and clinging to the valleys during the Glacial age on the hill-tops, gave birth in due season to one of the most markedly indigenous of our Terceira plants.

Occasionally, too, very minute land-snails would arrive alive on the island after their long sea-voyage on bits of broken forest trees—a circumstance which I would perhaps hesitate to mention in mere human society were it not that I have been credibly informed your own great naturalist, Darwin, tried the experiment himself with one of the biggest European land-mollusks, the great edible Roman snail, and found that it still lived on in vigorous style after immersion in sea-water for twenty days. Now, I myself observed that several of these bits of broken trees, torn down by floods in heavy storm-time from the banks of Spanish or Portuguese rivers, reached my island in eight or ten days after leaving the mainland, and sometimes contained eggs of small land-snails. But as very long periods often passed without a single new species being introduced into the group, any kind that once managed to establish itself on any of the islands usually remained

for ages undisturbed by new arrivals, and so had plenty of opportunity to adapt itself perfectly by natural selection to the new conditions. The consequence was that out of some seventy land-snails now known in the islands, thirty-two had assumed distinct specific features before the advent of man, while thirty-seven (many of which, I think, I never noticed till the introduction of cultivated plants) are common to my group with Europe or with the other Atlantic islands. Most of these, I believe, came in with man and his disconcerting agriculture.

As to the pond and river snails, so far as I could observe, they mostly reached us later, being conveyed in the egg on the feet of stray waders or water-birds, which gradually peopled the island after the Glacial epoch.

Birds and all other flying creatures are now very abundant in all the islands; but I could tell you some curious and interesting facts, too, as to the mode of their arrival and the vicissitudes of their settlement. For example, during the age of the Forest Beds in Europe, a stray bullfinch was driven out to sea by a violent storm, and perched at last on a bush at Fayal. I wondered at first whether he would effect a settlement. But at that time no seeds or fruits fit for bullfinches to eat existed on the islands. Still, as it turned out, this particular bullfinch happened to have in his crop several undigested seeds of European plants exactly suited to the bullfinch taste; so when he died on the spot, these seeds, germinating abundantly, gave rise to a whole valleyful of appropriate plants for bullfinches to feed upon. Now, however, there was no bullfinch to eat them. For a long time, indeed, no other bullfinches arrived at my archipelago. Once, to be sure, a few hundred years later, a single cock bird did reach the island alone, much exhausted with his journey, and managed to pick up a living for himself off the seeds introduced by his unhappy predecessor. But as he had no mate, he died at last, as your lawyers would say, without issue. It was a couple of hundred years or so more before I saw a third bullfinch—which didn't surprise me, for bullfinches are very woodland birds, and non-migratory into the bargain—so that they didn't often get blown seaward over the broad Atlantic. At the end of that time, however, I observed one morning a pair of finches, after a heavy storm, drying their poor battered wings upon a shrub in one of the islands. From this solitary pair a new race sprang up, which developed after a time, as I imagined they must, into a distinct species. These local bullfinches now form the only birds peculiar to the islands;

and the reason is one well divined by one of your own great naturalists (to whom I mean before I end to make the *amende honorable*). In almost all other cases the birds kept getting reinforced from time to time by others of their kind blown out to sea accidentally—for only such species were likely to arrive there—and this kept up the purity of the original race, by ensuring a cross every now and again with the European community. But the bullfinches, being the merest casuals, never again to my knowledge were reinforced from the mainland, and so they have produced at last a special island type, exactly adapted to the peculiarities of their new habitat.

You see, there was hardly ever a big storm on land that didn't bring at least one or two new birds of some sort or other to the islands. Naturally, too, the new-comers landed always on the first shore they could sight; and so at the present day the greatest number of species is found on the two easternmost islands nearest the mainland, which have forty kinds of land-birds, while the central islands have but thirty-six, and the western only twenty-nine. It would have been quite different, of course, if the birds came mainly from America with the trade winds and the Gulf Stream, as I at first anticipated. In that case, there would have been most kinds in the westernmost islands, and fewest stragglers in the far eastern. But your own naturalists have rightly seen that the existing distribution necessarily implies the opposite explanation.

Birds, I early noticed, are always great carriers of fruit-seeds, because they eat the berries, but don't digest the hard little stones within. It was in that way, I fancy, that the Portugal laurel first came to my islands, because it has an edible fruit with a very hard seed; and the same reason must account for the presence of the myrtle, with its small blue berry; the laurustinus, with its currant-like fruit; the elder-tree, the canary laurel, the local sweet-gale, and the peculiar juniper. Before these shrubs were introduced thus unconsciously by our feathered guests, there were no fruits on which berry-eating birds could live; but now they are the only native trees or large bushes on the islands—I mean the only ones not directly planted by you mischief-making men, who have entirely spoiled my nice little experiment.

It was much the same with the history of some among the birds themselves. Not a few birds of prey, for example, were driven to my little archipelago by stress of weather in its very early days; but they all perished for want of sufficient small

quarry to make a living out of. As soon, however, as the islands had got well stocked with robins, black-caps, wrens, and wagtails, of European types—as soon as the chaffinches had established themselves on the seaward plains, and the canary had learnt to nest without fear among the Portugal laurels—then buzzards, long-eared owls, and common barn-owls, driven westward by tempests, began to pick up a decent living on all the islands, and have ever since been permanent residents, to the immense terror and discomfort of our smaller song-birds. Thus the older the archipelago got the less chance was there of local variation taking place to any large degree, because the balance of life each day grew more closely to resemble that which each species had left behind it in its native European or African mainland.

I said a little while ago we had no mammal in the islands. In that I was not quite strictly correct. I ought to have said, no terrestrial mammal. A little Spanish bat got blown to us once by a rough nor'easter, and took up its abode at once among the caves of our archipelago, where it hawks to this day after our flies and beetles. This seemed to me to show very conspicuously the advantage which winged animals have in the matter of cosmopolitan dispersion; for while it was quite impossible for rats, mice, or squirrels to cross the intervening belt of three hundred leagues of sea, their little winged relation, the flitter-mouse, made the journey across quite safely on his own leathery vans, and with no greater difficulty than a swallow or a wood-pigeon.

The insects of my archipelago tell very much the same story as the birds and the plants. Here, too, winged species have stood at a great advantage. To be sure, the earliest butterflies and bees that arrived in the fern-clad period were starved for want of honey; but as soon as the valleys began to be thickly tangled with composites, harebells, and sweet-scented myrtle-bushes, these nectar-eating insects established themselves successfully, and kept their breed true by occasional crosses with fresh arrivals blown to sea afterwards. The development of the beetles I watched with far greater interest, as they assumed fresh forms much more rapidly under their new conditions of restricted food and limited enemies. Many kinds I observed which came originally from Europe, sometimes in the larval state, sometimes in the egg, and sometimes flying as full-grown insects before the blast of the angry tempest. Several of these changed their features rapidly after their arrival in the islands, producing at first divergent varieties, and finally, by dint of selection, acting in various ways,

through climate, food, or enemies, on these nascent forms, evolving into stable and well-adapted species. But I noticed three cases where bits of driftwood thrown up from South America on the western coasts contained the eggs or larvæ of American beetles, while several others were driven ashore from the Canaries or Madeira; and in one instance even a small insect, belonging to a type now confined to Madagascar, found its way safely by sea to this remote spot, where, being a female with eggs, it succeeded in establishing a flourishing colony. I believe, however, that at the time of its arrival it still existed on the African continent, but becoming extinct there under stress of competition with higher forms, it now survives only in these two widely separated insular areas.

It was an endless amusement to me during those long centuries, while I devoted myself entirely to the task of watching my fauna and flora develop itself, to look out from day to day for any chance arrival by wind or waves, and to follow the course of its subsequent vicissitudes and evolution. In a great many cases, especially at first, the new-comer found no niche ready for it in the established order of things on the islands, and was fain at last, after a hard struggle, to retire for ever from the unequal contest. But often enough, too, he made a gallant fight for it, and, adapting himself rapidly to his new environment, changed his form and habits with surprising facility. For natural selection, I found, is a hard schoolmaster. If you happen to fit your place in the world, you live and thrive, but if you don't happen to fit it, to the wall with you without quarter. Thus sometimes I would see a small Canary beetle quickly take to new food and new modes of life on my islands under my very eyes, so that in a century or so I judged him myself worthy of the distinction of a separate species; while in another case, I remember, a south European weevil evolved before long into something so wholly different from his former self that a systematic entomologist would have been forced to enrol him in a distinct genus. I often wish now that I had kept a regular collection of all the intermediate forms, to present as an illustrative series to one of your human museums; but in those days, of course, we none of us imagined anybody but ourselves would ever take an interest in these problems of the development of life, and we let the chance slide till it was too late to recover it.

Naturally, during all these ages changes of other sorts were going on in my islands—elevations and subsidences, separations

and reunions, which helped to modify the life of the group considerably. Indeed, volcanic action was constantly at work altering the shapes and sizes of the different rocky mountain-tops, and bringing now one, now another, into closer relations than before with its neighbours. Why, as recently as 1811 (a date which is so fresh in my memory that I could hardly forget it) a new island was suddenly formed by submarine eruption off the coast of St. Michael's, to which the name of Sabrina was momentarily given by your human geographers. It was about a mile around and 300 feet high; but, consisting as it did of loose cinders only, it was soon washed away by the force of the waves in that stormy region. I merely mention it here to show how recently volcanic changes have taken place in my islands, and how continuously the internal energy has been at work modifying and rearranging them.

Up to the moment of the arrival of man in the archipelago, the whole population, animal and vegetable, consisted entirely of these waifs and strays, blown out to sea from Europe or Africa, and modified more or less on the spot in accordance with the varying needs of their new home. But the advent of the obtrusive human species spoilt the game at once for an independent observer. Man immediately introduced oranges, bananas, sweet potatoes, grapes, plums, almonds, and many other trees or shrubs in which, for selfish reasons, he was personally interested. At the same time he quite unconsciously and unintentionally stocked the islands with a fine vigorous crop of European weeds, so that the number of kinds of flowering plants included in the modern flora of my little archipelago exceeds, I think, by fully one-half that which I remember before the date of the Portuguese occupation. In the same way, besides his domestic animals, this spoil-sport colonist man brought in his train accidentally rabbits, weasels, mice, and rats, which now abound in many parts of the group, so that the islands have now in effect a wild mammalian fauna. What is more odd, a small lizard has also got about in the walls—not, as you would imagine, a native-born Portuguese subject, but of a kind found only in Madeira and Teneriffe, and, as far as I could make out at the time, it seemed to me to come over with cuttings of Madeira vines for planting at St. Michael's. It was about the same time, I imagine, that eels and gold-fish first got loose from glass globes into the ponds and watercourses.

I have forgotten to mention, what you will no doubt yourself long since have inferred, that my archipelago is known among

human beings in modern times as the Azores; and also that traces of all these curious facts of introduction and modification, which I have detailed here in their historical order, may still be detected by an acute observer and reasoner in the existing condition of the fauna and flora. Indeed, one of your own countrymen, Mr. Goodman, has collected all the most salient of these facts in his 'Natural History of the Azores,' and another of your distinguished men of science, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, has given essentially the same explanations beforehand as those which I have here ventured to lay, from another point of view, before a critical human audience. But while Mr. Wallace has arrived at them by a process of arguing backward from existing facts to prior causes and probable antecedents, it occurred to me, who had enjoyed such exceptional opportunities of watching the whole process unfold itself from the very beginning, that a strictly historical account of how I had seen it come about, step after step, might possess for some of you a greater direct interest than Mr. Wallace's inferential solution of the self-same problem. If, through lapse of memory or inattention to detail at so remote a period, I have set down aught amiss, I sincerely trust you will be kind enough to forgive me. But this little epic of the peopling of a single oceanic archipelago by casual strays, which I alone have had the good fortune to follow through all its episodes, seemed to me too unique and valuable a chapter in the annals of life to be withheld entirely from the scientific world of your eager, ephemeral, nineteenth century humanity.

GRANT ALLEN.

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

THE Aphorist, or Wise Youth, already introduced to the public, offers a few more of his reflections.

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‘Call no man happy,’ says Solon, ‘till he is dead.’ ‘Call no man unhappy,’ Socrates added, ‘till he is married.’

If ever Religion were destroyed by Reason, it would be restored by Emotion.

We more frequently think people beautiful because we love them, than love them because we think them beautiful. The heart is not critical.

We can sometimes forget without forgiving, and owe a grudge though we cannot remember why.

It is foolish to give our affections to children, for others *may* forsake us, but *they* must.

When woman, according to Monsieur Paul Bourget, has lost every rag of character, she still clings fondly to an antimacassar.

We all have our foibles. The foible of moral censors in the Press is to bear false witness against their neighbours.

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Congress having thrown out the Copyright Bill, some persons in this country think it becoming to foam at the mouth. If there are people who have a right to be angry, they are rather the Americans than ourselves. Many of them, including all the literary class, are not only harmed in their interests, being under-sold by our unremunerated labour, but are outraged in their honour. They are made partakers in the shame of a wrong which injures themselves. We, in this country, are no worse off than we were before, and, at all events, are doing in this matter nothing to be ashamed of. We only continue in not receiving the money which we never did receive. This philosophy comes easily to a British author whom it does not pay to pirate. I myself hug the delightful reflection that, when any American adventurer has robbed me, he has lost money by it. Of course the feelings of writers whose labour has enriched pirates must be vastly different. *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone poeta.* But

the *poeta* who is not *vacuus*, whose work has 'money in it' for the pirate, cannot be expected to sing for him without regret. On the whole, there was a much more respectable minority in favour of the bill than one had looked for. 'If it wasna weel bobbet, they'll bob it again,' as the Scotch song has it. Better luck next time. The Americans, in the long run, will see that their own pockets and interests, moral, pecuniary, and literary, are not served by pouring indiscriminately all the trash of English fiction on their home market. And possibly we may learn something, too, in this controversy and publish cheaper books. Our public is rather stingy about book-buying. Rich people, who deny themselves nothing else, grudge five shillings for a book; still more do they grudge a guinea. Publishers, for all that, I know, may one day find a better market among people who are not rich. Yet it is difficult to break the English of a habit so confirmed in them as that of never buying even a shilling story, but sending for it to the circulating library.

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In one respect the American pirates are really too bad. They not only steal our books, to which we are accustomed like the eels to skinning, but they 'duff' them, as the Australian cattle-robbers say. They alter, compress, expand, to suit their market, or they crib a book from the periodical in which three-fourths of it has appeared, and send it into the world with a forged conclusion, but with the author's 'brand.' To put a man's name on a book which he did not write seems rather worse than an error in taste, and borders on the peccadillo of forgery. They also make unpremeditated bosh of an author's words, as when they print 'the holy opinions of the Goddess Isis,' or whoever she may be, instead of 'the holy pinions' whereon she winged her way through the Egyptian Pantheon. There is something very comic in talking of the pious opinions of an immortal deity.

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The mention of 'duffing' cattle reminds me of a delightful book which perhaps 'everybody' has read; but there are always exceptions to 'everybody.' Only lately has one made the acquaintance of Mr. Ralph Boldrewood's 'Robbery Under Arms,'<sup>1</sup> and to students equally belated, who like a tale full of strange life in the open air, I would respectfully recommend the romance. It has all the merit of 'Jack Sheppard,' or 'Rookwood,' with an exemplary moral thrown in. These bushrangers get no happiness from their misdeeds: wretchedness and ruin are all they reap.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillans.

But what a boyish ideal is the gentleman robber, Starlight, and what a pleasant character is the amiable, reluctant sinner, Jim Marston! It is a work in which the horses are really the heroes, and Bilbah and Rainbow, gallant steeds, may take their places among the fictitious characters who become our friends. The book has its careless passages. Wimbledon marksmen are introduced in 1850. In the very beginning quite a different account is given of Starlight's final exploit from that which ends the tale. The author did not know what he intended to say, or if he knew he forgot. Starlight grew upon him, probably, as he advanced, and became an archangel ruined. One only regrets that these gallant men shot the sergeant with the gold convoy. It would have been so much more pleasant if, like Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, while they were pirates, they had determined that the black flag should never be stained with a crime. But then they would have been even more impossible bushrangers than they are. No doubt blood must be shed when fighting is done.

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Thackeray has remarked on the immense number of persons who are killed in the Waverley novels, and on the perfect tranquillity and good taste with which it is managed. The heroes fall and die without unseemly emotion, as in the *Æginetan* marbles. They, and the reader, are never made in the least uncomfortable, any more than the warriors who fall every day, and feast every night, in Valhalla. Similar good taste marks the Icelandic sagas. Somebody's head is cloven to the breast-bone, or somebody's leg is lopped neatly off in almost every chapter, when shield and sword are aloft. But there is no unseemly description; their wickets are down, as it were, and the reader is no more pained than if the hero had merely retired, with a bow, to the Pavilion. This, no doubt, is the right way to describe fighting. It is the spectacle of valour and of high heart we want, not a picture of a shambles. Homer is less graceful: he is pleased to tell you exactly what uncomfortable part of the warrior is penetrated by the spear. Unlike most authors of battle-pieces, Homer had seen and knew well what he was talking about, and he wrote for experts. A well-known critic regards modern novels of hard blows as a recrudescence of barbarism. So is polyandry, I think, a recrudescence of savagery in its worst and least human form. Our critic, however, is an advocate of polyandry, an enemy of sword-strokes and spear-thrusts. Nothing could be much more disagreeable, in practice, than either antique diversion, but, of

the two, one prefers to read about fighting, rather than about free love. The author who really revived fighting novels after Scott was Canon Kingsley, 'an LL.D., a peaceful man.' Amyas is always hacking and hewing; the joy of Hereward is 'open manslaughter,' as much as that was the joy of Lancelot or Percival. I don't think that these airy blows and thrusts in the void need really make us, who read about them, ferociously disposed, and the man who tells a tale of desperate fights may be too good-humoured to shoot a partridge without a twinge of conscience. We are not going to take to the road and 'bail people up' because we are diverted by the courteous knights, the Marstons and Starlight, in Mr. Boldrewood's entertaining 'Robbery Under Arms.'

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The May-fly season appears to have been excellent this year, judging by the reports in the papers. Trout of six pounds weight and more have been captured in the Kennett, and the heart of the fortunate angler has rejoiced. What a pity it is that English anglers, millers, and people responsible for rivers in general, make such wild work with weed-cutting! You reach a stream, you begin to fish, and lo, what was water suddenly becomes salad. Whole beds of weed come floating down, and sport is out of the question. If you cast between the floating masses, your line catches in them, the fly is drowned, or drags out a long green tress of crow's-foot. Not only is the sport spoiled, the drinking water is also corrupted by the masses of decaying vegetable matter. It surely would not be very difficult to catch the weeds, drag them out of the water at certain points, and bury or burn them. The present shiftless fashion of passing them on down stream is wasteful, and wanton, and mischievous.

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In the last number of the *Ship*, we said that the tradition in Argyleshire keeps the memory of the real Appin murderer, that he was well known, and yet that the wrong man was allowed to hang for the deed: a thing still resented. We blamed the people for letting this be done, if they knew who the murderer really was. But we are now informed that there was no definite proof, only strong suspicion, and that the suspected man was, all his life, condemned by his neighbours. This is much more to the credit of the Celtic character than the facts as we had originally believed them to be, and apologies are freely offered to the sons of Uisnach.

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Mr. Harry Furniss, in his *Academy Antics*, brings an indictment against the Royal Academy, but scarcely, perhaps, in the right manner. To render R.A. 'Rattle Away,' is not very pointed, nor do the charges against the quality of the Academy's refreshments appear to be worth dwelling upon. There is a great deal to be said against the Academy. Artists who design in black and white, or in water-colours, are neglected, no doubt. Mediocre men are occasionally elected, and better men are overlooked. But it is difficult for me to believe that Academicians really alter their own pictures so as to kill those of outsiders which are placed in the neighbourhood. So many things of this kind are said, and believed, which are not true. Several times of late, and always, somehow, by lady moralists, the humble pen which indites these lines has been accused of divers acts of literary treason which, assuredly, it never committed. It is said to have written thirteen, or sixteen, or twenty-five favourable reviews of one book. It is accused of cowardly revenges on personal enemies. These tales are myths without any foundation in fact, and so, perhaps, are the legends about the evil deeds of Academicians. Our moral indignation often misleads us into a not very creditable credulity. So one may hope that the Academy is less black than it is painted. Men are mortal; they are inclined to believe, honestly too, in the artistic qualities of other men whom they like, and so Academicians will occasionally be elected while better artists are left in the cold. Again, the Academicians have the privilege of hanging far too many of their own works, and of abusing 'the line.' Some fairer method of hanging, by some less interested body of judges, ought to be invented. Also, it is to be wished that some mode of checking the sending in of innumerable failures could be discovered. No mortal judgment can resist, unharmed, the floods of odious daubs which are yearly presented. No modest picture of good quality can look its best in the wilderness of gilt and colour on the walls. The critics, too, if their opinion is not to be valueless, should have more than one day free for the formation of their ideas. It were also to be wished that the Academicians would pass a self-denying ordinance, and buy none of their own works with the revenues of the Chantry Fund. But, as this might be hard on the Chantry Gallery, could not the right of choice be invested, as at the British Museum, in some other judges, not members of the Academy? This appears more satisfactory on all hands, both to Academicians and other artists. But, where are the neglected geniuses of whose anguish we hear so much? Where are they? There be many galleries, and all

of us are eager to find good new painters. Yet we do not find them, or find them very seldom, and we can hardly believe that many of them dwell obscure in the cold shade of the Academy. As in literature, so in art, in spite of such examples as Millet, neglected genius is uncommonly scarce. Neglected people who fancy themselves geniuses are as common as blackberries. They will always exist, Academy or no Academy. Fortunately we have no Academy of Letters, and those intrigues and heart-burnings are less frequent in the open field of literature. Many faults the Academy has, but perhaps Mr. Furniss's method of assailing them will rather harden its heart in its errors. The charge is a *charge*, a caricature, and lacks 'sweet reasonableness.' We may agree with much that Mr. Furniss says, and yet regret the manner in which he marshals his power of pencil and pen. We may remember, too, that disappointed people are credulous, and accept and circulate myths about the conduct of others which are—mythical. Of course one does not reckon Mr. Furniss among the disappointed ones, but he may have accepted some of their apocryphal legends about Academic meanness and jealousy without convincing evidence. At all events, we who merely hear the stories must suspend our judgment till the evidence is produced. This reserve we might ask for, with propriety, if our own conduct, and stories about that, were in question.

A. LANG.

### *The 'Donna.'*

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